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THE MAYA VASE BOOK

A CORPUS OF ROLLOUT PHOTOGRAPHS OF MAYA VASES

BY JUSTIN KERR

WITH ESSAYS BY

KARL A. TAUBE
KIKOLAI GRUBE AND WERNER NAHM

EDITED BY BARBARA AND JUSTIN KERR

VOLUME 4

THE ELECTRONIC EDITION

THE MAYA VASE BOOK VOL. 4
A Corpus of Rollout Photographs of Maya Vases

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PREFACE

In Volume 4, we have the pleasure of presenting a remarkable rectangular vase, The Birth Vase, with a brilliant and intriguing analysis by Karl Taube. Other foursided vases have been found, most of them Early Classic, and for the large part, either incised or carved. Dorie Reents-Budet has shown a painted red-on-white shard from a rectangular vase found in Buenavista del Cayo. However, the painting on the vase we are publishing is typical of Classic period polychrome vessels.

When I first saw the vase I was struck by the shape and format of the scenes. The proportions of the sides of the vessel appeared to simulate the proportions of the Dresden codex. I have no idea when fan-folded paper codices made their first appearance among the Maya, but there is enough illustrated evidence on the vases themselves to conclude that paper codices and polychrome vases were certainly contemporaneous.

Taube points out the rectangular vase represents a house. There is little evidence to suggest that painters of vases ordered blank vessels to paint on, but we can guess that this four-sided vase was ordered for the purpose of depicting this rare scene.

Many artists may have simply painted on what was already available, and had to accommodate their painting to the shape of the vessel at hand. For example, low bowls forced the artist to bend or crop figures to fit that particular format; yet the artist had complete control over his media and space. We find narrow cylinders with many figures in procession as well as wide bowls with only two lords. There is one example (Kerr 1375), where the artist painted the tail of the serpent, Och Chan, on a cup handle. On Early Classic carved vessels, the artist/potter and the artist/carver were one and the same, while the Classic polychrome artist was painting on vessels that may have been prepared by other specialists. The Classic period cylinder vessel, the yu ka bi, is designed to serve as a background wall on which a scene is painted and thus had to have been prepared expressly for painting.

“Fancy” polychrome vessel shards represent only a moderate percentage of all the types of shards that are found in excavations, therefore suggesting that the workshops that produced elite pots were probably rather small. Possibly, large production work shops set aside a part of their output for these “fancy” vases as well. It is abundantly clear that polychrome vessels in the Classic period

had very wide distribution and were not confined only to elite burials. Many of those that we consider the "best" vases are found in rather unpretentious house-mound burials. This suggests that these cylinders were available to a wide class of people. We can only guess at the mechanism of distribution.

This volume also offers us an extraordinary paper by Nikolai Grube and Werner Nahm who have compiled a dictionary of the *way* as seen on ceramic vessels. Although these characters have been with us for a long time, their functions and relationships are now much more meaningful. Nikolai's masterful drawings, which accompany the paper, allow us to perceive these *way* with greater clarity. Many scholars have focused their studies on this aspect of Maya life and I am sure that this dictionary, with its insightful commentary, will be an invaluable resource.

It is gratifying to know that students and devotees of the Maya are taking advantage of this corpus and that the rollout photographs are being utilized in many areas of research, both in iconography and epigraphy.

Following this preface is a compendium of numbers that link many of the Kerr Vase numbers with those of the Maya Survey Project headed by Ron Bishop at the Smithsonian Institution. These numbers will be found in Dorie Reents-Budet's beautiful book, *Painting the Maya Universe,* for which I had the pleasure of making the photographs. In that volume there is a detailed explanation of the Maya Survey Project, neutron activation, and the type of information that can be gleaned from it.

In this volume as in previous books, I am using the abbreviations PY, CX, CV, IN, MD, and BW.

PY	Polychrome
CX	Codex style
CV	Carved (Clay or Stone)
IN	Incised
MID	Molded
BW	Black text on white (see vol. 3)

Again. I must insert a caution. Many of the vases that are published here have been restored. As any one who has worked in the field knows, very few vases ever come to light of day in pristine condition. Therefore, judgements have to be made about what constitutes too much restoration. I have been careful in trying to publish what seems to me to be more correct than not. When there is restoration on a vase, but there is still information to be gained, I feel it is necessary to publish it. However, the caution stands. If you question the validity of the painting, look at other vases with the same or similar scenes and text. There is much to learned by making these comparisons. There is even something to be learned from recognizing a restorer's style. I hope that by continuing to enlarge the corpus of rollout photographs, thereby making a larger sample available, more students will be inspired to study the vases.

Images of the shapes of the vessels and other information may be found on line in The Maya Vase Database. Point your browser to:
http://research.famsi.org/kerrmaya.html
For the Precolumbian Portfolio:
http://research.famsi.org/kerrportfolio.html.

For information on using these photographs, in papers, books, or on-line, please point your browser to:
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Justin Kerr
New York
1994 and 2004

Since the publication of Volume 4 in 1994, the concordance has been expanded.
The updated concordance may be found at:

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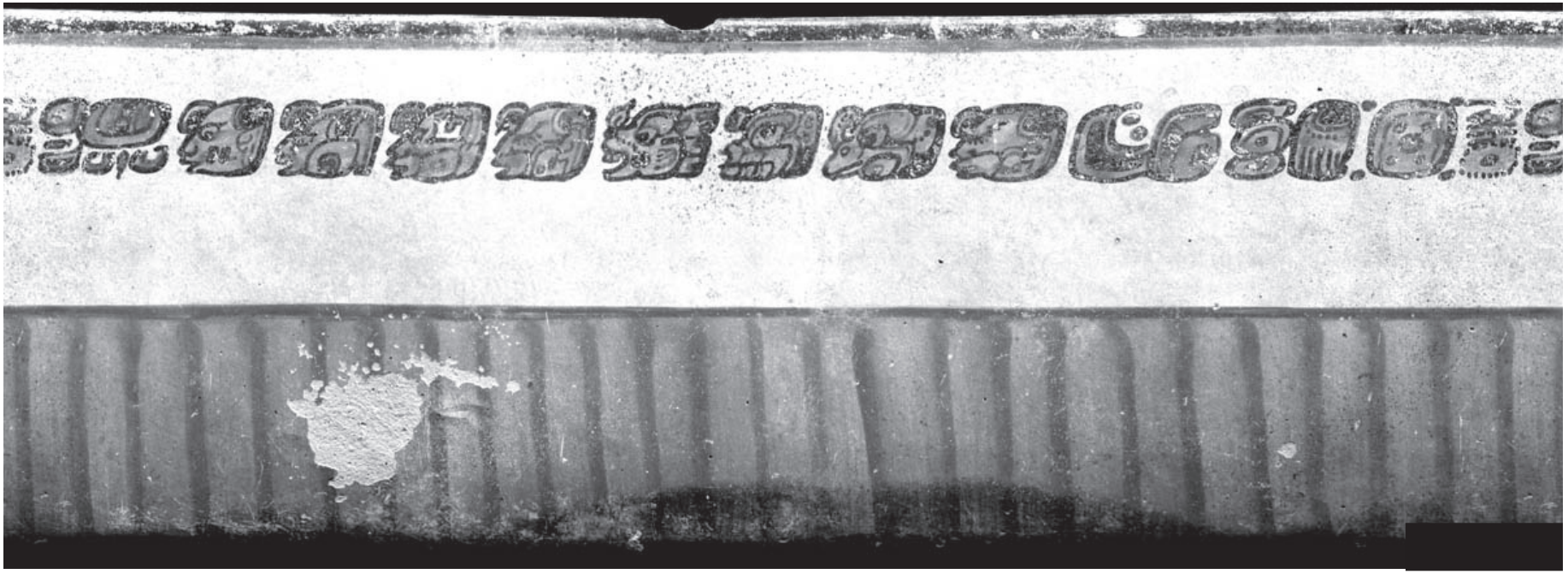

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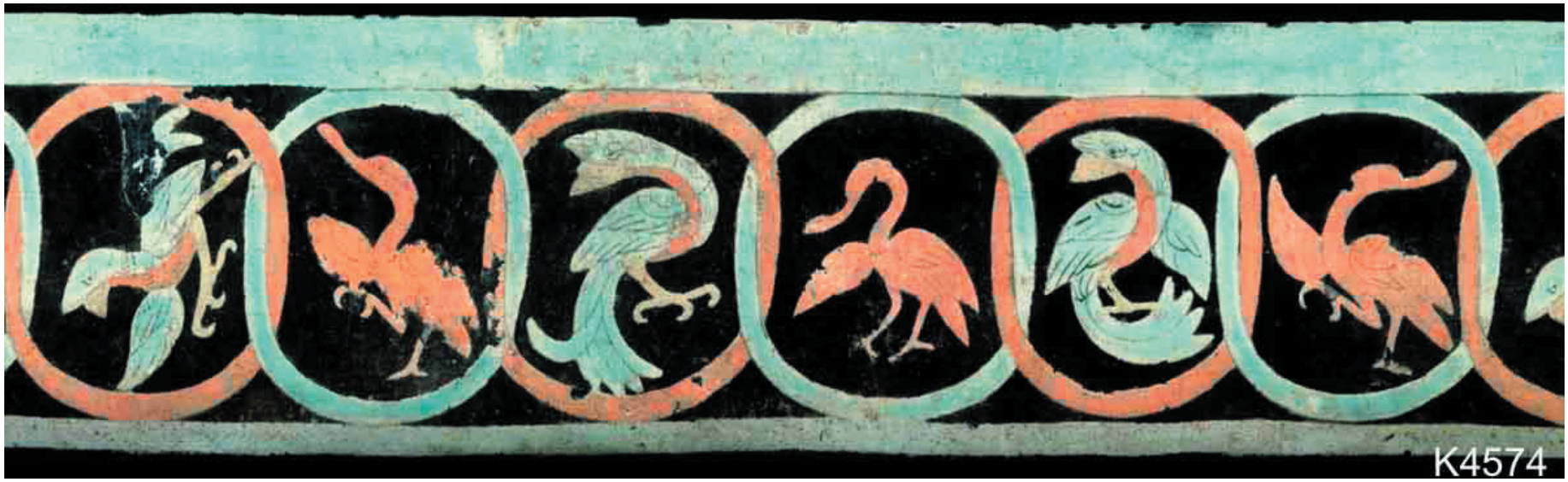

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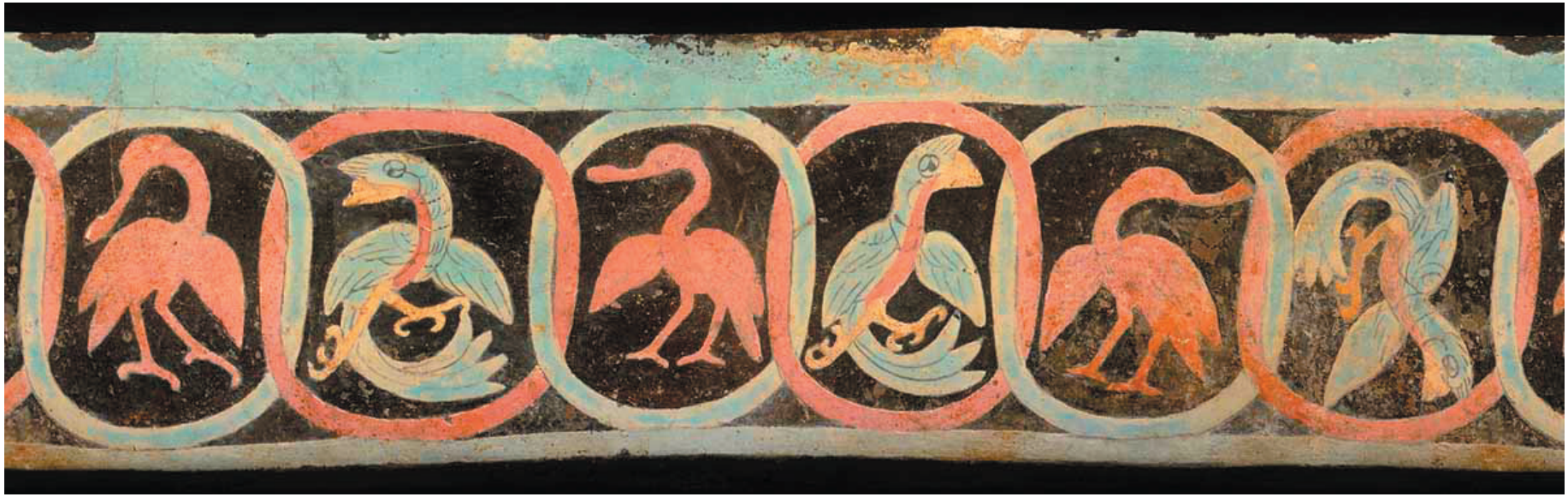

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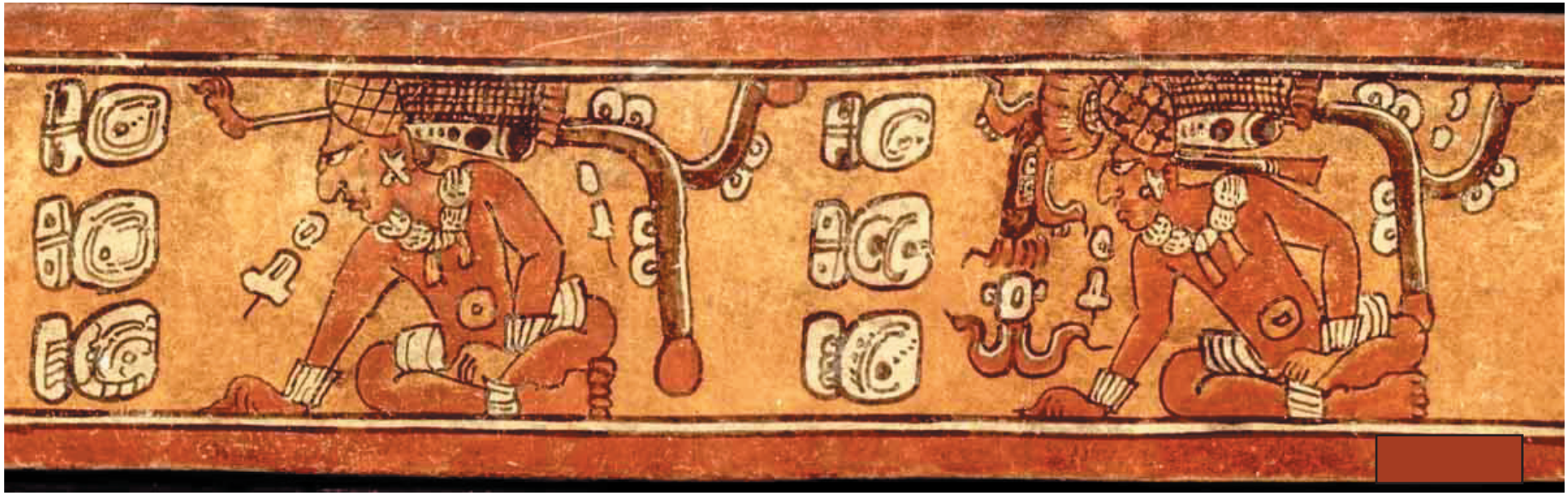

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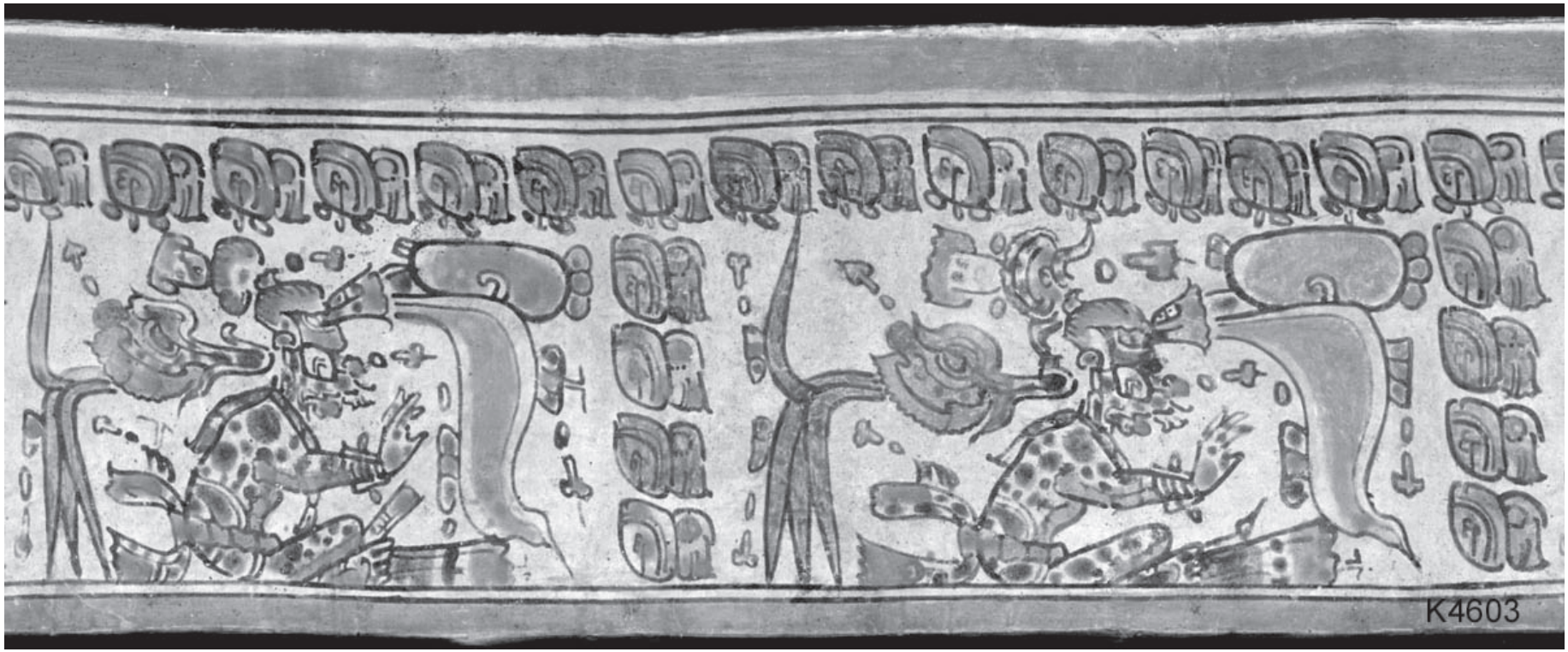

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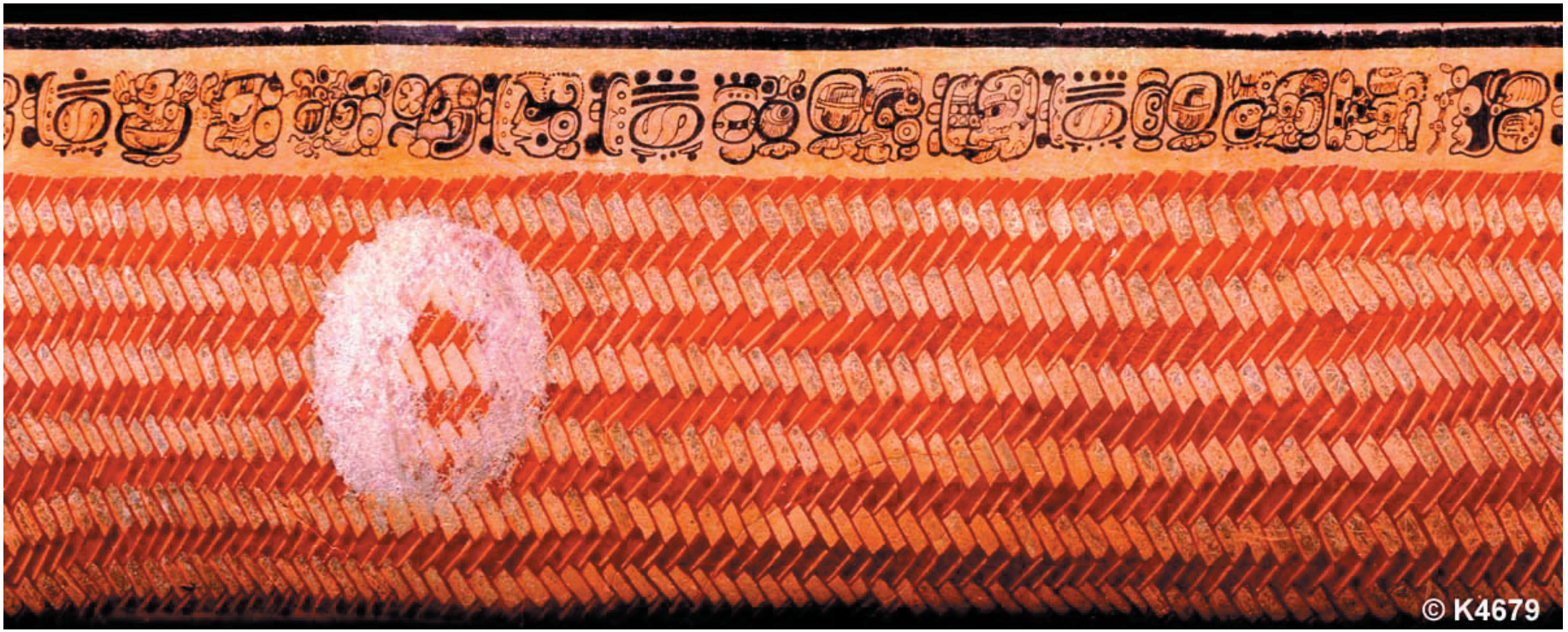

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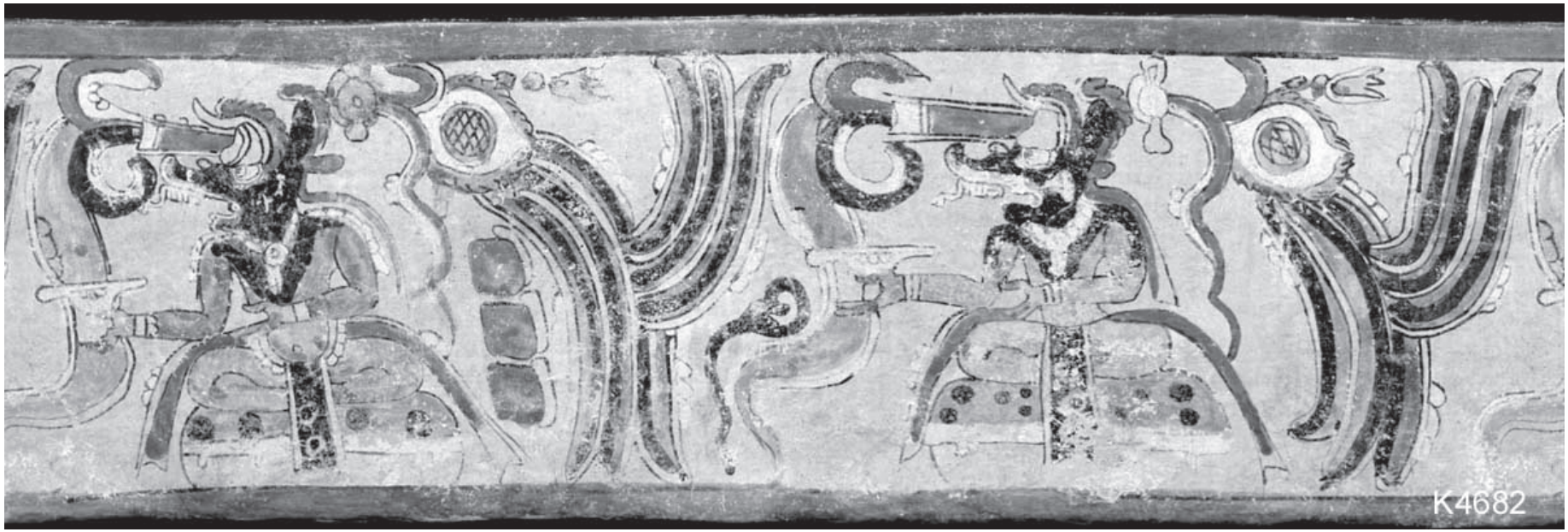

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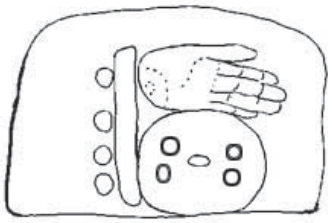

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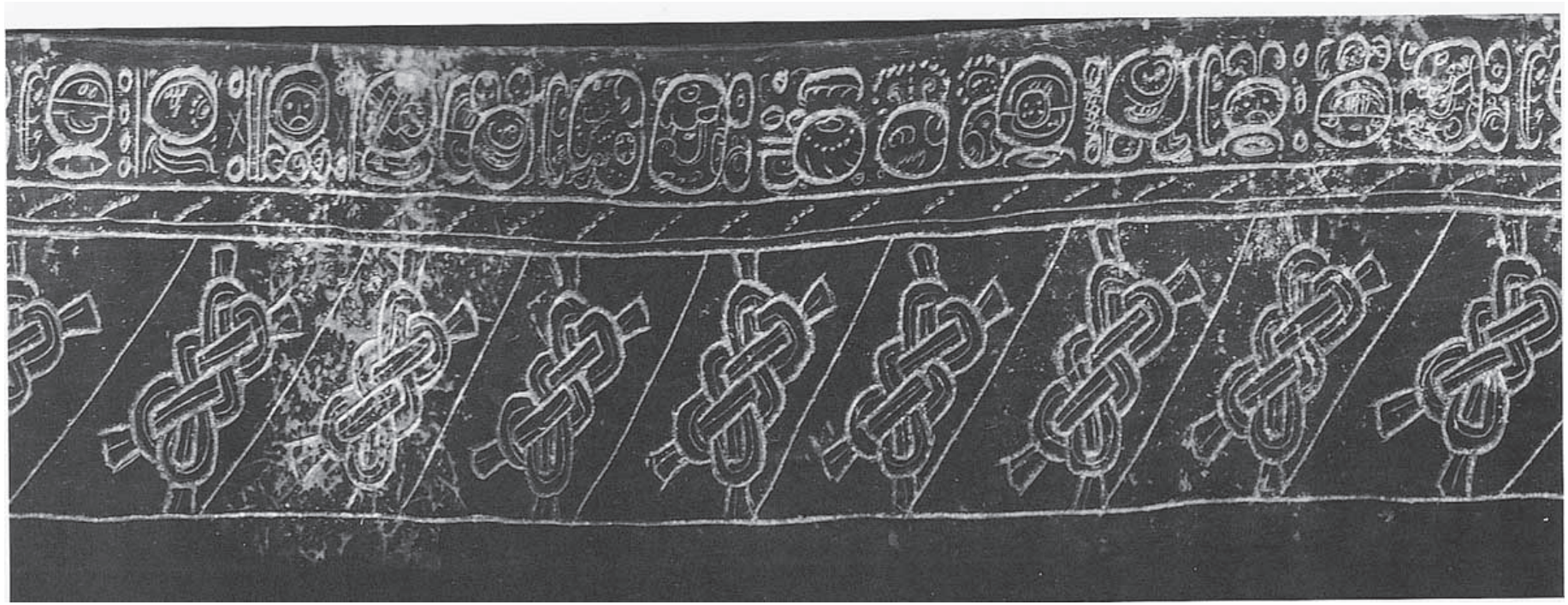

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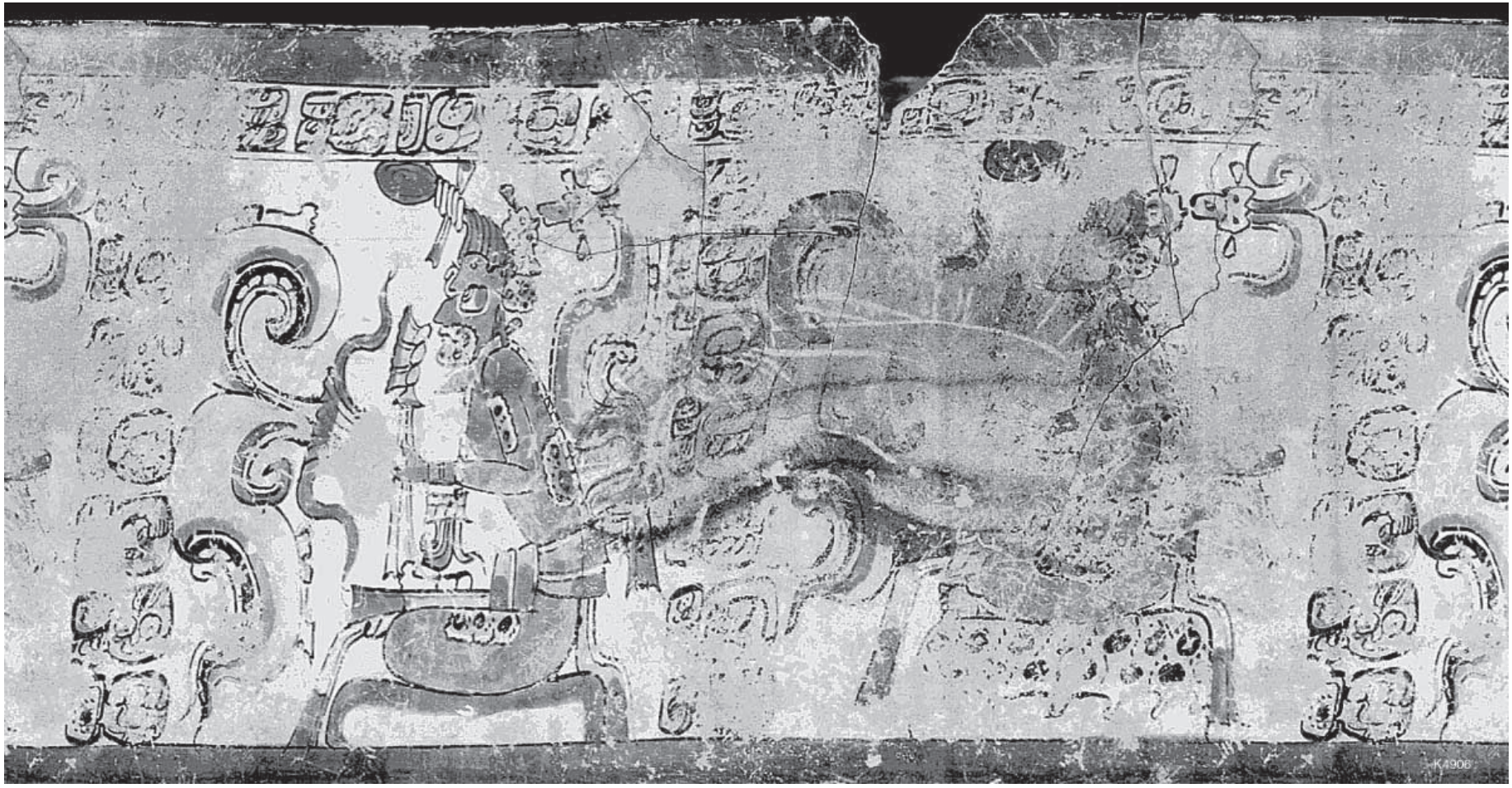

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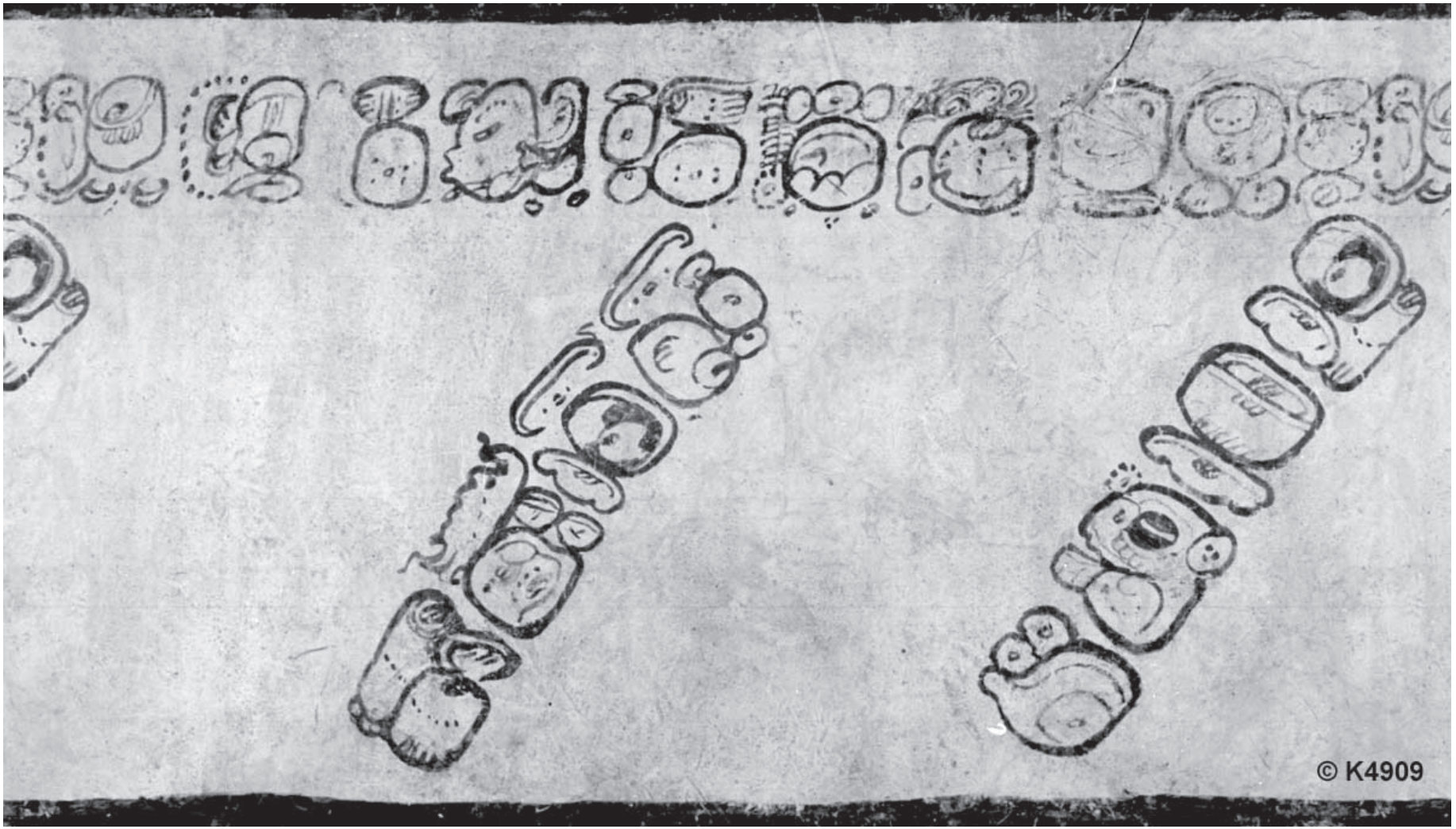

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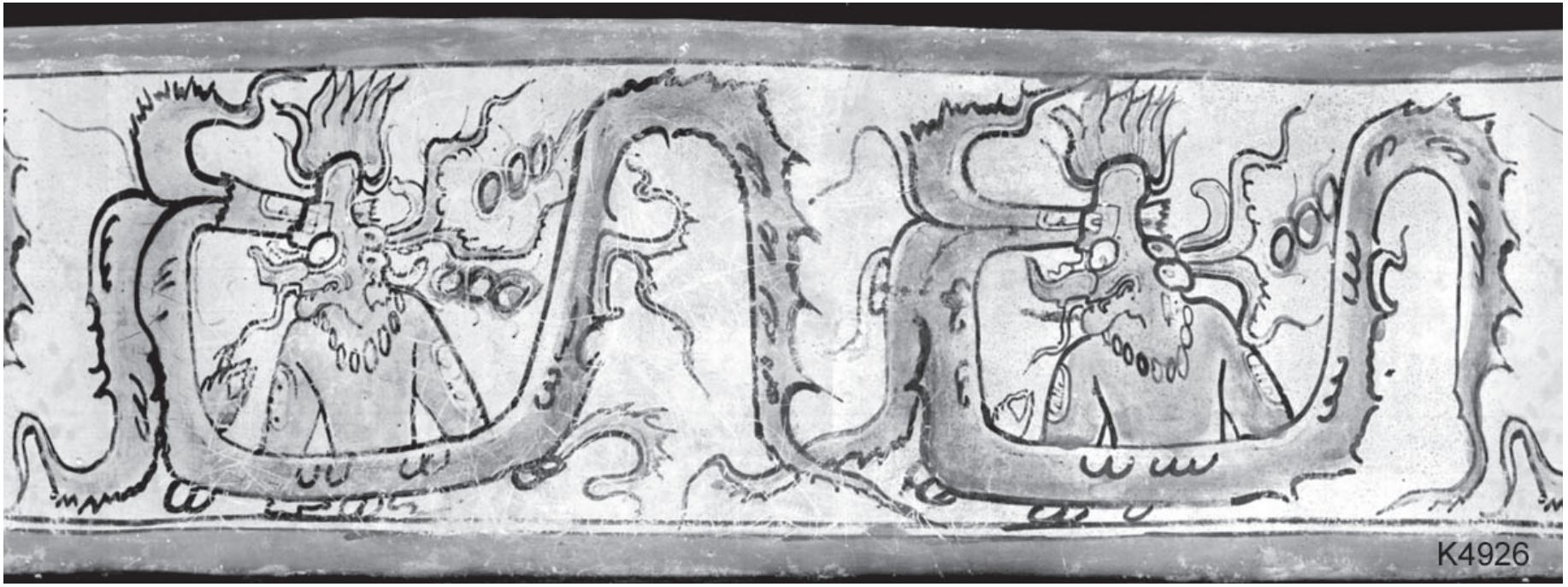

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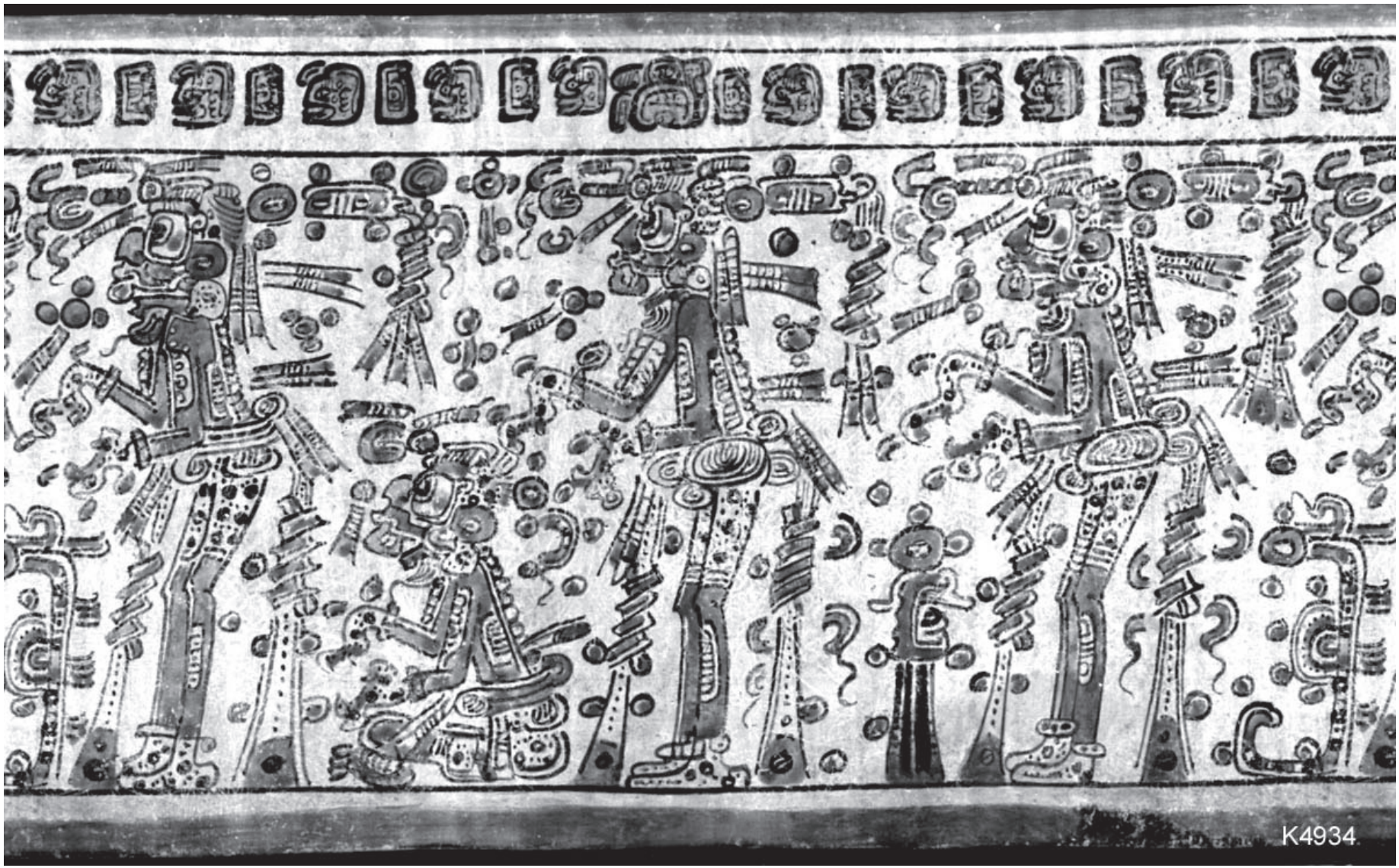

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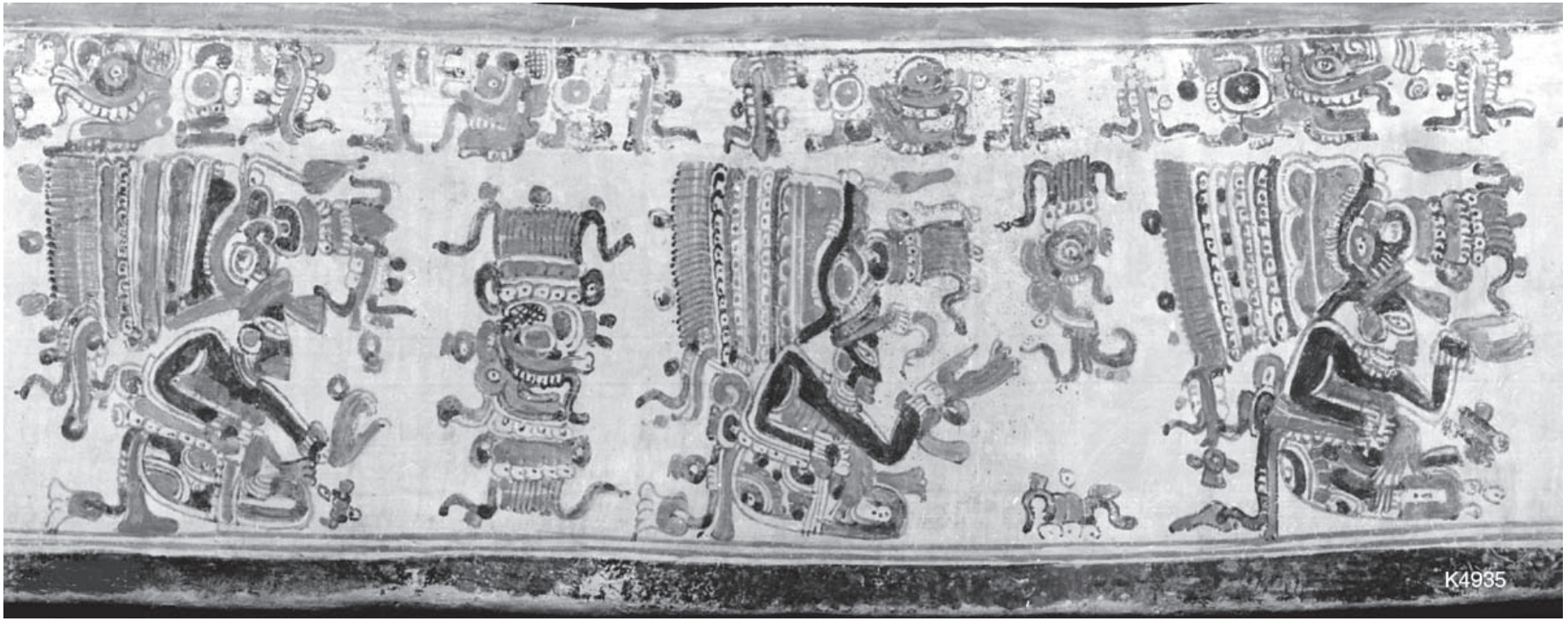

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Ht. 5.3 Dia. 14.5 Cir 38.0 cm. CX

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File No. 4996
Ht. 19.0 Dia. 9.3 Cir 29.0 cm. PY

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File No. 5001
Ht. 13.3 Dia. 13.5 Cir 39.8 cm. PY

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File No. 5002
Ht. 5.0 Dia. 17.5 Cir 48.5 cm. CX

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File No. 5003
Ht. 14.5 Dia. 16.5 Cir 46.5 cm. PY

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File No. 5004
Ht. 19.6 Dia. 11.5 Cir 35.5 cm. PY

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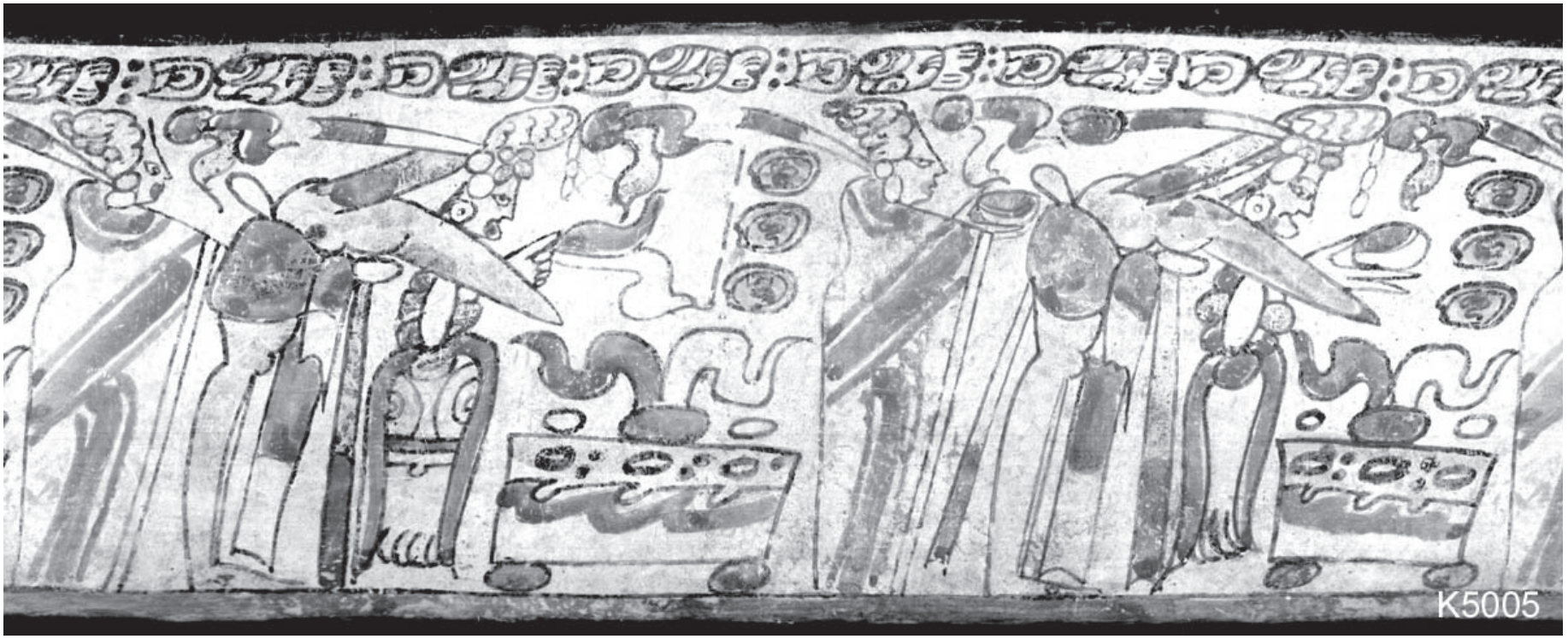

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Ht. 15.6 Dia. 16.5 Cir 55.0 cm. PY

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File No. 5007
Ht. 14.5 Dia. 13.8 Cir 37.2 cm. CX

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Ht. 22.0 Dia. 11.5 Cir 54.0 cm. MD

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File No. 5008
Ht. 10.5 Dia. 11.7 Cir 45.0 cm. PY

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File No. 5011
Ht. 12.5 Dia. 17.0 Cir 53.0 cm. PY

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THE ESSAYS

The Birth Vase K5113

The Birth Vase K5113

THE BIRTH VASE: NATAL IMAGERY IN ANCIENT MAYA MYTH AND RITUAL

KARL A. TAUBE

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades, a vast number of Late Classic Maya vases have been published, and it is now possible to describe regional schools and even the hands and names of individual artists. Nonetheless, it is clear that scholars have studied only a minute fraction of the vases created during the Classic period, and a great many surprises are still ahead. At times, a new vase comes to light that is quite unlike any example previously known. The subject of this study is one such vase. Unfortunately, the origins of this object are poorly known. However, the vase received sudden recognition on December 6th of 199 1, when it was featured in a New York Times article. The article notes the similarity of its unusual flat sided for mat to ancient Maya codices, and suggests that this vessel constitutes the first reliable evidence for screenfold books among the Classic Maya. Although the vessel sides do closely resemble Maya screenfold books, codices were already well documented for the Classic Maya.

In a masterful iconographic study, Michael Coe (1977) identified codices and their scribes in Classic Maya vessel scenes. Moreover, damaged but identifiable remains of Maya screenfold books have been recovered from excavations at Classic Maya sites (Lee 1985: 28). Rather than representing a screen fold codex, the vessel refers to the four sided Maya house, and presents a uniquely intimate view into Classic Maya customs and belief concerning birth.

Approximately 25 cm. high, the vase is composed of four rectangular panels of equal dimensions. Although a rare form, other examples of quadrangular ceramic vases are known for the Classic Maya. Coe (1973: nos. 79, 8O) describes two lidded carved vessels of quadrangular form. Whereas these vases are both Late Classic, an Early Classic example is also known (Parsons, Carlson and Joralemon 1988: No. 61). All three of these vessels were originally supplied with four sided sloping lids, and in the case of the second example illustrated by Coe, there are two Principal Bird Deities placed on opposite sides of the lid. The Principal Bird Deity is commonly depicted on the roofs of buildings in Classic Maya art, and it is quite possible that with their sloping lids, these quadrangular vessels allude to the basic structure of a roofed four sided house. [1]

The four sided house also appears with ceramic cache vessels at Quiriquá and once again the lid serves as the the gabled roof (see Stromsvik 1941: 81 83; figs. 25 27,31, 32). Another similar cache vessel was excavated at Guaytan; in this case even the doorways are represented, here with pairs of vertical red lines (see Smith and Kidder 1943:fig. 41c).

Both the carved vases and cache vessels were supplied with sloping lids to resemble roofs. The rough and unpainted beveled rim of the polychrome vase under discussion suggests that it was also lidded. Considering the birth iconography associated with this vase, it is quite apt that the originally lidded form resem-

1. *Epigraphic evidence also indicates that lidded or stoppered vessels were conceived of as houses or otot by the Classic Maya (see Houston, Stuart and Taube 1989: 724). Among the contemporary Lacandon, the ceramic "god pots" are considered as housesfor the gods (Davis 1978).*

Fig. 1a. *Dresden Codex page 74.*

bled a roofed house, the essential place of Maya birth.

Aside from the carved-ware vessels, there are also examples of such quadrangular vases in painted polychrome. One such vase appeared on the cover of Mexicon (Vol. VII, No. 6, 1985), and a description of this piece was subsequently published by von Winning and Dütting (1987) in the same journal. Dorie Reents-Budet (pers. comm., 1993) notes that fragments of Late Classic polychrome quadrangular vases have recently been excavated at Ixtonton, Guatemala, and Buenavista, Belize.

The quadrangular polychrome vase under examination, here referred to as the Birth Vase, contains elaborate painted scenes on all four panels, each of these accompanied by a hieroglyphic text. Save for the unpainted vessel lip, each panel is bounded by a red border. With their planar surfaces, dimensions, red borders, and accompanying texts, the four panels are notably like the extant Maya screen-folds. The scenes are especially similar to Dresden page 74, long interpreted to be a representation of the cosmogonic flood (Förstemann 19O6: 266)(Fig. la).

Both the Postclassic page and Classic ceramic panels are dominated by highly narrative mythological imagery, with the text being reserved to only the upper portion of the scene. It is noteworthy that Dresden page 74 is one of the few Maya codical passages that appears to narrate a mythological event. It is possible that in contrast to the fairly cramped passages in divinatory almanacs, codical references to mythology may have frequently been accompanied by highly narrative scenes.

The scenes painted on the Birth Vase fall within the style of Late Classic polychromes from the central Maya lowlands. The vessel is especially similar to a cylindrical vase published by Coe (1978: No. 12). Thus the Bearded Dragon head appearing on this cylindrical polychrome is notably similar to the example on Side II of the Birth Vase. In both cases, the face is marked by fine lines of diminutive circles, a fairly rare convention in Late Classic polychromes. Given this stylistic affinity, it is interesting that both vases are fashioned from chemically similar clays (Dorie Reents-Budet, pers. comm. 1993). However, Reents-Budet notes that the Birth Vase clay is especially similar to samples taken from vessels in the vicinity of Ramonal, Tikal, and Waxaktun. Although the ultimate origins of this vase are still unknown, the data provided by Reents-Budet suggests that it derived from the central Peten region.

Fig. 1b. *Kerr no. 595.*

The Birth Vase has suffered some damage by breakage and erosion. Along with the probable lid, some small portions of the vessel body have been lost. In several areas, these gaps have been filled and repainted. The noteworthy restored regions appear below the face of the standing goddess of Side II, the midsection of the standing goddesses of Side III, and in the middle of the dividing horizontal black line of Side IV. The differential erosion appearing on the vessel fragments reveals that it was broken in antiquity.

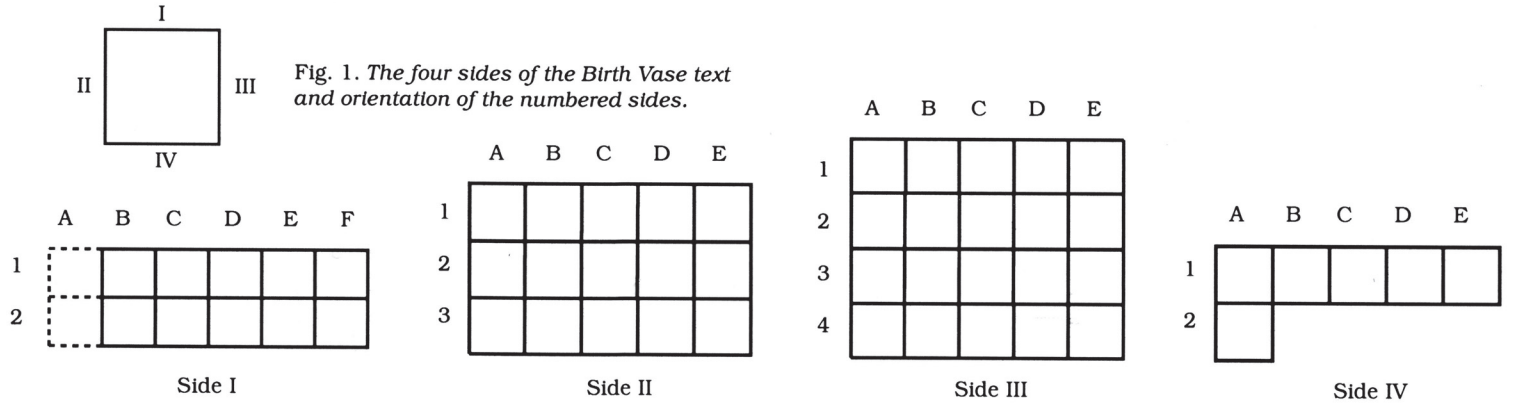


Fig. 1. *The four sides of the Birth Vase text and orientation of the numbered sides.*

Thus much of the surface deterioration occurred after breakage, with some fragments suffering more erosion by their particular placement in the soil.

THE HIEROGLYPHIC TEXT

The text found upon the Birth Vase is unusually long and elaborate for a Maya ceramic vessel. There were originally some fifty three glyphic blocks on the four vessel sides; of these, eight are virtually effaced. The text is painted with skill and precision, and promises to offer profound insights into Classic Maya myth and ritual. However, the text is difficult to decipher for several reasons. For one, it has suffered considerable erosion, with some portions being obliterated or illegible. The glyphs, themselves also present a major challenge, since many are rare or poorly understood. In addition, the reading order of the four sides is by no means certain. The highly narrative attendant scenes are a major aid to decipherment, and for this reason, this initial study will be primarily iconographic rather than epigraphic. Nonetheless, it is also clear that the text has direct bearing on the interpretation of the scenes.

Rather than accompanying specific individuals, the text is limited to the uppermost portions of the vessel sides. The four sides are labeled in Roman numerals according to their suggested order of reading, but it should be stressed that this order is only provisional. Rather than being labeled in a single consecutive order, each glyphic block is referred to by the particular side on which it occurs (Fig. 1). Thus should the sequential order of the four sides change by subsequent research, this would not severely alter the numbering of the glyphs. The distance number on Side II indicates that the reading order follows the typical form of Maya hieroglyphic writing, that is, left to right and top to bottom in columns of two. For Sides II and III, the final fifth column is read vertically as a single column. The small text of Side IV seems to be first read vertically through column A and then horizontally to end with the sign at IV:E I.

The vessel side labeled Side I is so designated for several reasons. For one, it will be seen that this side illustrates the primary birth event of the vessel. However, the text itself provides the strongest evidence that this constitutes the first side. Although all of the other sides have a horizontal row of only five glyphic columns across the top, Side I was supplied with six. However, the red border marking the right edge covers over half of the sixth column. It would appear that this text was written before the red edging

obliterated much of column F. When it became clear that more room was needed to accommodate the red border, the scribe used only a row of five columns for the following three sides. The contents of the Side I text provides a still more compelling reason. At I:E2 there is the Kin variant used in distance numbers, here referring to 6 Kins. The following glyph at I:F2 seems to have a numerical superfix. Given the fact that distance numbers typically present the Long Count units in reverse order, beginning with the lowest unit of Kins rather than the highest, it is quite possible that I:F2 refers to the next highest unit, the Uinal. This distance number then continues on Side II, here starting with 16 Tuns at II:AI, and ending with a reference to the Calabtun unit at II:A3.

Although the first four glyphs of Side I are virtually gone, the main sign at 1: B I is accompanied by a numerical coefficient, quite probably nine. Thus the text may well have started with a calendar round expression, with I:A 1 referring to the Tzolkin and I: B I to the twenty-day Haab month. The sign at I:C I is clearly the "upended-frog" glyph for birth, surely referring to the scene illustrated below. It is unfortunate that the immediately following glyph is missing, as this would refer to the individual being born. The following sign is a portrait glyph of a probable young woman at I:C2. A second portrait glyph, in this case an aged being, occurs at I:Fl. This sign probably refers to old Goddess O, who frequently appears with similarly craggy features (e.g. fig. 2d).

Continuing with the distance number begun on Side I, the Side 11 text begins with the expression 16 Tuns, 15P) Katuns, 16 Baktuns, 8(?) Pictuns, and I Calabtun. Since the coefficients for the Uinals, Katuns and Pictuns are not entirely clear, the actual date is uncertain, and no calendar round date is presented. Nonetheless, the vase text undoubtedly concerns mythological time, since it continues two placements beyond the Baktun to the Calabtun, which is 16O,OOO 36O-day Tun periods. Stephen Houston (1993, pers. comm.) suggests that this distance number refers to a date after the birth event described on Side 1, with the "upended frog" glyph at 11:133 referring to the same birth mentioned on Side 1. Given the vast temporal span of the distance number, it is possible that the Side Il text could partly concern actual historical figures of the Classic period. However, there is no indication of known historical individuals or places in any part of the Birth Vase text.

At II:C I there is a zoomorphic face with a ring around the eye, a curl in the corner of the mouth, and a three-dotted circular ear element often found in representations of frogs and turtles. This name may refer to the probable Pauahtun figure emerging from the serpent mouth in the accompanying scene, since the turtle was of the more common zoomorphic forms of this aged being. However, the portrait glyph is also quite like the old woman facing the serpents on Sides II and III. In these scenes, the old woman has a ring around the eye, and on Side III, it is also evident that she has a large curl emanating from the back of the mouth. It is also possible that rather than referring to turtles or toads, the dotted circular ear element represents the jaguar ear worn by the old woman.

The logographic form of the way glyph (T539) identified by Houston and Stuart (1989) appears on the Birth Vase at Il: C2, an Ahau glyph, spotted on the upper right side. Although badly eroded, the prefix may have been an u sign, creating the reading *u-way,* or "*way of...*". Although the portrait glyph at ILC I could refer to the way, the particular name of the spiritual co-essence could well be

the virtually destroyed glyph at ILDI. The meanings of the next two compounds are unknown. The first at II:D2 is composed of a burning *le* sign prefixed by a phonetic *ya*, and the following sign at Il:C3 seems to be a profile of an old woman's face prefixed to a phonetic *ho*. The glyph at ILD3 appears to be a Pauahtun name glyph, here with a personified form of the Cauac glyph providing the *tun* value. The accompanying coefficient of four is often found with Classic and Postclassic Pauahtun name glyphs (e.g. III:A2).

The final column of Side II begins with the "sunrise glyph"-- the solar Kin sign splitting apart the glyphs for the sky and earth. The following compounds at ILE2 and E3 can be phonetically read as *xabil(l) yalab(i*). The meaning of this remains obscure, although the root *al* in the second compound signifies "child of mother" in many Mayan languages. In Quiché, *alab* signifies, "boy, unmarried son" (Edmonson 1965: 7) and in Chol, *alob* is "child" (Aulie and Aulie 1978: 29). It is possible that the phrase yalab or *uyalab* signifies something akin to "her offspring."

The text of Side III is especially long, and contains twenty glyph blocks. However, much of the text is poorly preserved, with the first two glyphs of column E being essentially erased. Nonetheless, the text does contain several recognizable deity names. At III:A2, there is the name of Pauahtun prefixed by the coeffIcient of four. The skeletal head of God A, the death god, appears immediately below at IlI:A3. At III:A4, there is another deity portrait head, in this case too eroded to identify. Finally, the head of a Jaguar deity appears at 111:134; although this may represent old Goddess O, the features more closely resemble the male Jaguar God of the Underworld.

The first compound of Side IV contains a portrait glyph with the same three-spotted circle appearing on the saurian head at II:C 1. However, here the damaged glyph appears to be of a human face and in addition, has a prefix. Given the present condition of the compound, it is uncertain whether it refers to the three Pauahtuns illustrated in this scene, or to the accompanying young woman. Barbara MacLeod (199O: 339-4O) has deciphered the compound below at IV:A as *hulah*, or "arrived.[2] Thus the column A glyphs seem to describe the arrival of an individual, possibly the young woman in the scene below.

Fig. 8a. *Censer from Side IV of the Birth Vase.*

The compound at IV:C 1, a T5O6 Kan glyph with a T28O o prefix, may refer to the burning censer in the lower center of the Side IV scene. Citing independent investigations by Nickolai Grube and Stephen Houston,

Freidel, Schele, and Parker (1993) note that the Kan sign appearing in the glyph for the month Cumku was probably read ol. With the phonetic *o* prefix, the IV: C I compound seems to be also read *ol.* Freidel, Schele, and Parker (ibid.) use the ol reading of Cumku in reference to a class of ritual bowls and censers which they also suggest are labeled as *ol*. The examples illustrated (p.678) are entirely comparable to the large censer at the lower center of Side IV (Fig. 8a). [See pages 676 through 68O for all figures, nos. 2a through 11 c. I

With its blackened eye and the trace of a

2. I am indebted to Stephen Houston for pointing out this reading to me.

beard-like tuft on the cheeks, the glyph at IV:D1 can be identified as an opossum face. This sign may refer to the Pauahtun figures in the accompanying scene, since the Pauahtun frequently appears in the form of an opossum (see Taube 1989: 354-357).

Although the Birth Vase text still awaits a detailed and thorough decipherment, several important points may be gleaned from this preliminary review. For one, the text seems to refer twice to a birth event. From this birth, the text moves forward though a vast expanse of time, indicating that the text concerns mythology rather than only mundane historical events. The mythological content of this text is indicated not only by calendrics but by the presence of known deity names. Among the gods mentioned are the old Goddess O, Pauahtun, the death god, as well as probable references to the young birthing goddess at I:C2 and the Jaguar God of the Underworld at III:D4.

THE ICONOGRAPHIC SCENES

The four sides of the Birth Vase provide wonderfully detailed views into Classic Maya ritual and mythology pertaining to birth. The vessel scenes isolate and identify a number of motifs and rites found in Maya art as being specifically involved with the act of human birth. Although the four scenes portray mythological events performed by gods, it is clear that they are directly related to actual Maya birth practices, many of which are still being performed in the ethnographic present. However, although many of the actions are based on actual Maya birth practices, the vessel scenes also appear to supply a mythical charter or rationale for certain rituals performed at birth.

SIDE I
THE YOUNG GODDESS

The primary vessel side from which all other scenes unfold depicts a young woman accompanied by at least two old females. She stands, wearing a long skirt cinched to the level of her exposed breasts. Two knotted sashes encircle and delineate the region of her waist. Quite possibly, this unusual detail of dress relates to her pregnant condition, and may have served to constrict the abdomen at birth. Thus among the contemporary Tzotzfl of San Andr6s Larrainzar, the husband stands behind the woman and tightens her sash to speed delivery (Holland 1962: 218) .[3] Although it would be tempting to identify this young woman as the Classic period moon goddess, she bears no common lunar features, such as the lunar crescent, a rabbit, or the beaked facial element commonly found with the Classic goddess (see Taube 1992: figs. 3O-31). The remains of a Jaguar ear can be discerned behind her head; however, it is not clear whether this belongs to her or the adjacent old goddess. On Side IV of the Birth Vase, there is another skirted woman, probably the same young goddess. In this case, she clearly displays a spotted jaguar ear. It has been noted that her name glyph may appear at LC2, a youthful female face with a possible death spot and jaguar ear.

Side I

3. The contemporary Mixtec of Juxtlahuaca also place a wide sash around the woman while embracing her at birth. Immediately after delivery, the cloth is tightened; "If the sash is not put on tightly and adjustedproperly, the woman could get sick and die, since it is thought to prevent the blood and placenta from rising and is said to help expel the placenta more rapidly (Romney and Romney 1966:93)."

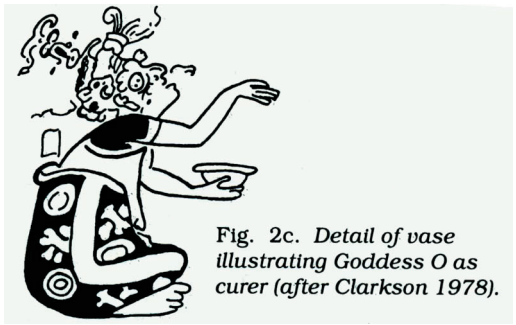


Fig. 2c. *Detail of vase illustrating Goddess O as curer (after Clarkson 1978).*

THE OLD GODDESSES

On Side I, the young woman is surrounded by several old women. One of the aged ladies stands in profile holding a bowl (Fig. 2a), while another embraces the young woman from behind. Quite possibly, a third old woman stood opposite the figure in profile, but extensive erosion prohibits firm identification. These aged women are but aspects of a specific goddess who appears at least seven and possibly nine times on this single vase. To indicate her advanced years, she usually displays a chapfallen and wrinkled face and long, pendulous breasts. A spool of cotton and a twisted snake headband serves as her headdress. An entity with strong jaguar attributes, she often has jaguar ears, jaguar paws or mittens, and the three spotted jaguar eye serving as the hieroglyphic sign for the day name Ix.

Although relatively rare in Classic Maya art, the aged goddess commonly appears in the Dresden and Madrid codices of Postclassic Yucatdn. In an emendation to the Schellhas system of deity classification, Gdnter Zimmermann (1956) termed the codical figure Goddess O. Like the earlier Classic form, the Postclassic goddess is an old woman wearing a serpent headdress and displaying jaguar attributes. At times, the Postclassic form also wears the cotton spool in her snake headdress (e.g. Taube 1992: fig. 51a). In the codices, she is phonetically named chak chel, clearly a reference to Ix Chel, the famed Yucatec goddess of curing and childbirth (see Tozzer 1941: 9-*10, 129, 154-5). Although Ix Chel is commonly, and erroneously, identified with the youthful and comely Goddess I, she is actually the old and barren Goddess O.

Aside from the vase under discussion, Goddess O occurs in several other Classic contexts. Recent excavations at Oxkintok uncovered a Terminal Classic sculpture of Goddess O (Fig. 2b). Rivera Dorado (1989: 125) identifies the stone sculpture as Goddess O, or Ix Chel, by her pendulous breasts and crossed-bone skirt. In both Classic and Postclassic Maya art, Goddess O often wears a skirt with crossed bones. In one Late Classic vessel scene, the old goddess displays the Jaguar ear and Ix eye along with the crossed-bone skirt (Fig. 2c). Although previously identified as a male god, Goddess O appears on yet another Classic vessel. Along with Jaguar mittens and a prominent Jaguar ear, the goddess wears a skirt and a bound serpent headdress; yet another serpent appears at her waist, probably serving as a belt (Fig. 2d).

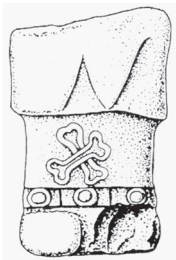


Fig. 2b. *Stone sculpture, Oxkintok, Yuc. (after Rivera Dorado 1989).*

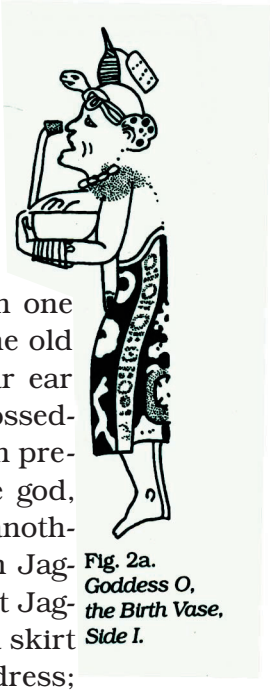


Fig. 2a. *Goddess O, the Birth Vase, Side I.*

M.A. Ciaramella (n.d.) has recently noted that the twisted serpent headdress of Goddess O has a clear analogue in contemporary costumes of highland Maya women. In the Tzutuhil mythology of Santiago Atitlan, one group of old goddesses have actual snakes as their head ribbons (set Tarn and Prechtel 1986: 178). Cit-Ing Pettersen (1977), Ciaramella also notes that the twisted cloth headdress crossing the brow of married Pokomchi women symbolizes a coral snake. Although in cloth, the form of this headdress closely re-

Fig. 2d. *Goddess O carrying probable censer (after Coe 1978; vessel 16).*

sembles the intertwined serpent headbands appearing on the Birth Vase. The actual twisted cloth headdress is also found in Classic Maya art, and is relatively common on Jaina style figurines. At times, an old woman with sagging breasts wears this headdress (see Pifia Chan 1968: figs. 56, 61). Given the serpent significance of this headpiece, these cited figurines can also be tentatively identified as Goddess O. A third Jaina style figurine depicts a skirted old woman displaying Jaguar ears as well as the twisted cloth headdress (see Miller 1975: Cover; 44). Although she appears as a warrior wielding a weapon and shield, her age, headdress and Jaguar ears identify this figure as Goddess O.

According to the sixteenth century account of Diego de Landa, Ix Chel is "the goddess of making children (Tozzer 1941: 129)." Although Ix Chel may in fact be the mother of the gods, the supreme genetrix of creation, her primary role is not as a fecund mother, but as an aged midwife, one whose social function is to produce children. Among contemporary peoples of Mesoamerica, midwives are typically old, post-meno-pausal women (Cosminsky 1977: 3O7).

Side I of the Birth Vase provides striking evidence that the Classic Ix Chel also has the role of midwife. The scene of the young woman holding a pair of twisted serpent cords while Goddess O embraces her from behind is an explicit representation of birth, as is commonly performed in the Maya region today. Among many Maya peoples, the pregnant woman holds onto a cord hung from a house beam while giving birth. The use of the birth rope is recorded for the modern Yucatec (Redfield & Villa Rojas 1934: 181), Tzotzil (Guiteras-Hohnes 1961: 1O7), and Pokomarn Maya (Reina 1966: 24 1). Writing for the Tzotzil of Chenalh6, GuiterasHolmes (1961: 1O7) notes that while the pregnant woman holds onto the hanging rope or a chair, "the midwife stands behind her and grasps her by the waist with encircling arms." This description of the assisting midwife is identical to the Classic vessel scene, where an aged Goddess O stands behind the woman and squeezes her abdomen. Whereas this Goddess O is probably helping to push out the birth, the second midwife seems to be awaiting the child or the afterbirth, which will be placed in her bowl.

THE BIRTH ROPE

The use of a hanging rope for support at birth is not limited to the Maya area, and is probably of great antiquity. The birth rope is also known for the contemporary Tarascans of Michoacan (Beals 1973: 166). the Mixtec of Oaxaca (Ravicz and Romney 1969: 397), and the Mayo of northwestern Mexico (Beals 1945:56). Although the Birth Vase provides the only explicit prehispanic representation of the suspended cord used in birthing, images of similar twisted serpentine ropes are common in Maya art. One exquisite black background vase depicts an elaborate twisted white cord terminating in a pair of serpent heads. The primary event mentioned in the accompanying text is birth, and it is reasonable to interpret the twisted rope as the birth cord. However, the twisted serpent rope is also thematically related to an even more basic element of birth, the umbilical cord. A number of researchers have noted that the umbilical cord can be represented as a snake in Maya art (e.gs. Miller 1982: 94-5; Stone 1988: 82; Gutierrez 199O; Bassie-Sweet 1991: 153-55; Freidel, Schele and Parker 1993). According to Miller, the twisted serpent motif found in the murals of Late Postclassic Tulum is to be understood as the umbilical cord. However, I suspect that there is considerable thematic overlap between the birth rope and the umbilical cord, not only by

their shared presence in birth events, but also by the particular placement of the rope within the Maya house. Suspended from the central interior of the structure, the birth rope is essentially the umbilicus of the house. The parallel is particularly striking when one considers that in Yucatec and other Mayan languages, the term na signifies both house and mother.

In Maya thought, the house constitutes a basic metaphor for the cosmos, with the four world trees serving as the corner posts of this great structure. Among the modern Chorti, each of the cosmic corner posts is termed oi, "one of the four tree trunks set in the ground to support the roof and walls of a house (Fought 1972: 433)." According to the Tzotzil of Zinacantan, the universe is "like a house, like a table (Vogt 1976: 11)." For the Classic Maya, the Pauahtun world bearers can be found in the corners of structures, as if they are corner posts as well as cosmic world bearers (e.g. Copdn Structure 11). Just as the birth rope is hung from the center of the Maya house, there is also the cosmological concept of a cord hanging from the center of the sky. Citing the work of Jos6 Fernandez, Freidel, Schele, and Parker (1993) note that the contemporary Quich6 conceive of a celestial umbilicus linking the center of the sky to the underworld. Sosa (1985: 346) records a recent Yucatec altar that had a ring ofxtabka'anil [stdabka'anil] vine hanging from the central intersection of a pair of crossed arches. In Yucatec, utabka'anil signifies 'cord of the sky,' and it is probable that the placement of the xtabka'anil vine denotes the cord hanging from the center of the sky. According to the presiding hmen and the participants, the entire four-legged altar represented the world, with the hanging ring denoting u hol Glorya, a cosmic hole or conduit in the center and zenith of the sky (ibid.). The colonial Yucatec Book of the Chilam Balam of Chumayel makes mention of a celestial rope (sum) or cord (tab) that descends with the "word of heaven," that is, it serves as a means of bringing divine powers to the earth (see Roys 1967: 82, 155).

Several stelae from the site of Caracol, Belize, illustrate a pair of intertwined serpents descending from the top of the monument (Fig. 3b-c). In form and placement, they are like the twisted serpent ropes appearing on the Birth Vase (Fig. 3a).1 Anthropomorphic figures, probably of conjured ancestors, can be seen emerging from the mouths of the twisted serpents. On Caracol Stelae 6 and 3, the serpents descend from a cleft sky, and it is likely that this cleft represents a pre-Hispanic form of u hol Glorya, a celestial conduit for the gods and ancestors to be born into this world.'

On Caracol Stela 5, the twisted serpents descend not through a sky hole, but by a diving supernatural bird, quite probably the Principal Bird Deity (Fig. 3c). In many instances, the Principal Bird Deity appears with twisted serpents in its craw (e.gs. Hellmuth 1987: figs. 489-91, 516, 5495O, Coe 1989: fig. 14). It has been recently argued that in ancient Maya ritual, the Principal Bird Deity served as a powerful vehicle for bringing supernatural powers, such as gods and ancestors, into the human plane (F r e i d e I , Schele, and Parker 1993). The twisted serpents often carried by the Principal Bird Deity allude to this conjuring ability in a specific way. Whether as umbilical cords or

4. In the Nuttall and Vindobonensis codices, the MLxtecform of Quetzalc6atl (9 Wind) descendsfrom a markedly similarjagged cleft sky. In his descent, 9 Wind stands upon a rope that descends directly out of the celestial cleft (see Nuttall pp. 18, 19, Vindobonensis p. 48). Probably, this rope alludes to both the umbilical cord and the birthing rope suspended within the MLxtec house during birth.

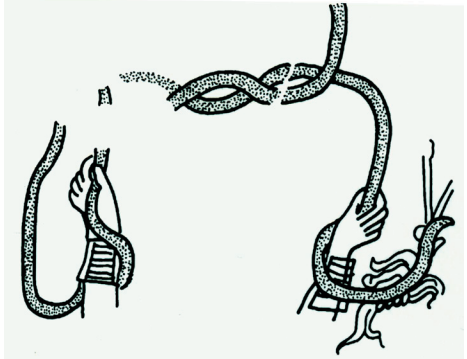
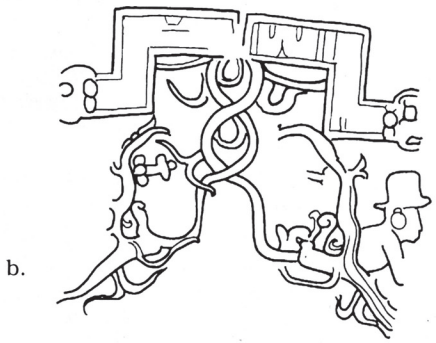


Fig. 3a. *Twisted serpent rope held by young goddess, the Birth Vase, Side I.*

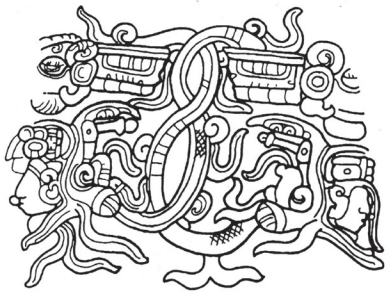
as the birth rope, the snakes are a clear metaphoric reference to birth, that is, the ritual summoning of supernatural beings into the human realm was considered as a process of birth .6

At times, the Principal Bird Deity can appear on structures holding the twisted serpent cords. On the north sides of Quirigu;d Stelae A and C, the Principal Bird deity is atop a sky band roof from which descend long, twisting ropes to flank the dancing individual below (see Maudslay 188919O2, 11: Plates 8, 2O). On Piedras Negras accession stelae 6, 11, and 14, the Principal Bird deity holds the twisted serpent rope while perched on the roof of a

scaffold hut (Fig. 9a). In House E at Palenque, the Principal Bird Deity and the serpent rope appear above the doorway of an actual building (Fig. 3e). The twisted snake ropes identify these structures as "birth houses", and in this specifically architectonic context, the cords can be identified with the birth ropes hanging from the ceilings of actual Maya houses.



b.



c.

d.

Fig. 3b. *Birth rope suspended from cleft sky, Caracol Stela 3 (after Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981: fig. 3).*
3c. *Birth rope passing through jagged cleft sky, Caracol Stela 6 (after Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981: fig. 8).*
3d. *Probable Principal Bird Deity with birth rope, Caracol Stela 5 (after Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981: fig.6).*

THE BASAL ELEMENTS

:es stand upon three
appears in the center
, where the youthful
:ndant midwife stand
ing zoomorphic head
com-
monly referred to as a Cauac Monster. Epigraphic research by David Stuart (1987: 17-23) demonstrates that the Cauac Monster is actually a personified mountain, or wits in Mayan languages. Serpent bodies emerge out the mouth of the zoomorphic mountain; their heads can be discerned on Sides Il and 111. The snake bodies are marked by a convoluted rope-like device, which Stephen Houston (pers. comm. 1993) notes is very much like a hu-

5. An excellent Early Classic example of the celestial twisted serpents appears in the upperportion of Stela I of Corosdl, a site approximately 5 km. east of the center ofTikal (see Jones and Miguel Orrego C. 1987).

6. For the ancient Maya, penitential bloodletting served as a basic ritual means of communicating with the gods and ancestors. For males, the penis was a preferred organ for bloodletting. Although this act has been often interpreted as an imatation of menstntation, it almost surely refers to the pain and copious blood occurrIng at birth. In addition, the rope often pulled through the wounded genitalia probably represents the bloodied umbilicus ernerging fromm the loins. Stuart (1988: 192) notes that the birth of the Paddler Gods mentioned In the text of-Dos Pilas Stela 25 seem to be a metaphoric reference to the ritual conjuring of the two gods by bloodletting.

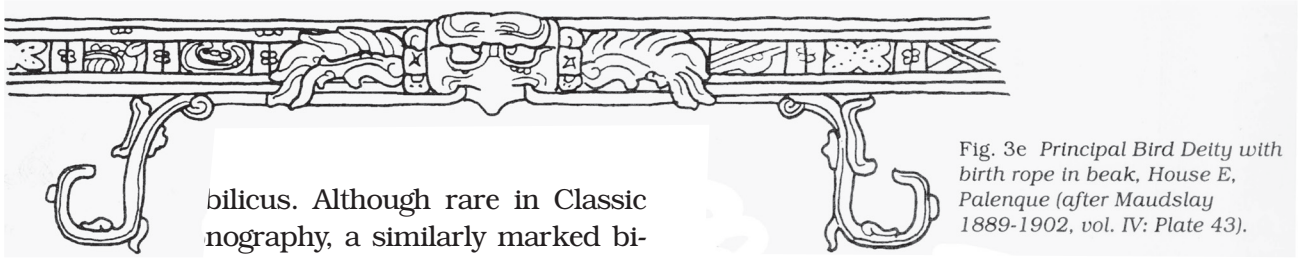


Fig. 3e *Principal Bird Deity with birth rope in beak, House E, Palenque (after Maudslay 1889-1902, vol. IV: Plate 43).*

bilicus. Although rare in Classic nography, a similarly marked bicephalic serpent appears on a stone censer from the region of Palenque (Fig. 6a).

The other two virtually identical platform elements flank the central mountain (Fig. 4a). The better preserved example can be seen to be a spotted bone segment topped by a black hooked device. Together, the two elements form the U-shaped bone device serving as the upper portion of the Uayeb sign (Fig. 4b). In zoomorphic form, this element occurs as the jaws surrounding Pacal upon the Sarcophagus Lid at Palenque. Freidel, Schele and Parker (1993) note that this skeletal Ushaped device denotes an entrance to the underworld, or Xibalba. Thus Side 1 portrays both conduits to the heavens and the deathly underworld.

The combination of the twisted sky ropes and the skeletal underworld maw is by no means limited to the Birth Vase, but is a relatively common theme in Maya iconography. A ceramic censer from the region of Teapa, Tabasco, depicts a Maya lord seated upon a probable mountain flanked by twisted cords containing human figures; the U-shaped maw surrounds the body of the king (see Westheim et al 1969: fig. 25 1). The sides of shaped skeletal maw. Much like the Teapa censer, the ropes and U-shaped devices flank depictions of the ruler on the north and south sides of the monument. On the south side, the rope and skeletal maws are accompanied with zoomorphic mountains marked with Cauac signs (Fig. 4c). Thus as in the case of Side I and probably the Teapa censer as well, the south side of Copdn Stela N contains sky ropes, mountains, and underworld maws. As either the pregnant woman or the Maya king, the central figure is portrayed in the attitude of birth, surrounded by basic elements of the cosmos.

The twisted celestial ropes and skeletal maw also appear in instances without the mountain or a single central figure. On the upper surface of the altar at the base of the Hieroglyphic Stairway at CopJLn, the skeletal maw contains a tortoise shell and the twisted cords (Fig. 4d). The ropes form a net-like support and plat-

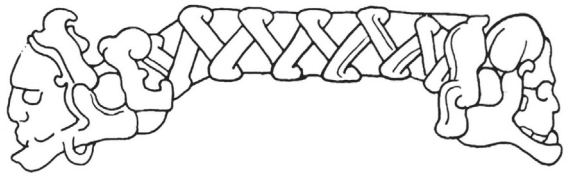


Fig. 6a. *Bicephalic serpent with snake and jaguar heads; compare body patterning to Birth Vase serpents (after Easby and Scott 1970: No.175).*

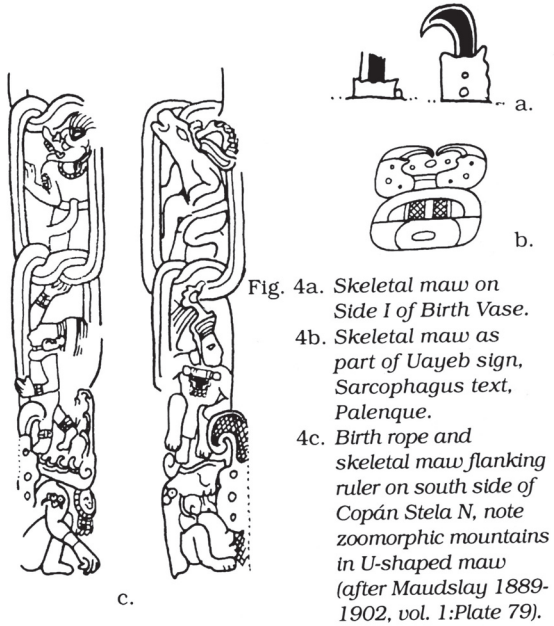


Fig. 4a. *Skeletal maw on Side I of Birth Vase.*
4b. *Skeletal maw as part of Uayeb sign, Sarcophagus text, Palenque.*
4c. *Birth rope and skeletal maw flanking ruler on south side of Copán Stela N, note zoomorphic mountains in U-shaped maw (after Maudslay 1889-1902, vol. 1:Plate 79).*

form for four activelv interacting individuals. This scene is quite similar to one appearing on a Fine Orange vessel from Zacualpa, Guatemala (Fig. 4e). Here four individuals confront one another amidst the twisted ropes. One hook-shaped half of the skeletal maw can be observed to the viewer's right. Perhaps the most elaborate version of the sky cord and U-shaped maw occurs in the Late

Postclassic murals of Temple 16 at Tulum (Fig. 4O. The scene again encompasses four figures suspended on twisted rope within a U- shaped zoomorphic maw. Although the significance of the sky cords, hanging figures, and skeletal maw combination remains to be established, it seems to refer to creation or conjuring in the metaphoric sense of birth.

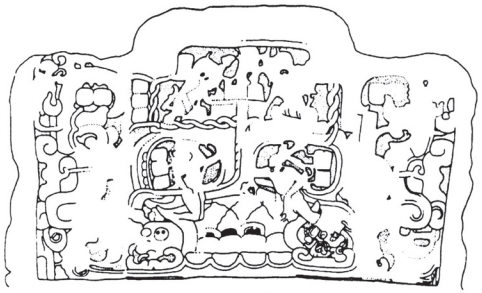


Fig. 4d. *Upper surface of altar at base of Hieroglyphic Stairway, Copán (drawing courtesy of Linda Schele).*

SIDE Il
THE OLD WOMEN

Three forms of Goddess O appear on Side II, and like the Side I examples, they are old women with sagging breasts, Jaguar ears, cotton spindle whorls in their headdresses, and zones of red paint on their shoulders, necks and cheeks. Although two of the three figures wear the twisted serpent headband, the lowest woman wears a segmented headband in its place. This individual stands out for another reason as well. Whereas all of the other headdress spindles are swollen with spun thread, hers is but a stick tipped with a short length of cotton. Like the three fates of Classical antiquity, the thread might allude to the development of the womb or the future "lifeline" of the individual. Since weaving and childbirth are among the most essential creative practices of Mesoamerican women, it is not surprising that they overlap considerably in native thought. Sullivan R 982: 14) notes that for the Aztec, the growth of the cotton spindle was compared to the development of the fertilized womb. According to the modern Sierra Totonac of Veracruz, the spider of the east weaves the newborn's umbilicus (Ichon 1973: 74, 173-4). The contemporary Huichol compare the lifetime of an individual to a great weaving, begun at birth and ending at death (Shaefer 1989: 191). Similarly,

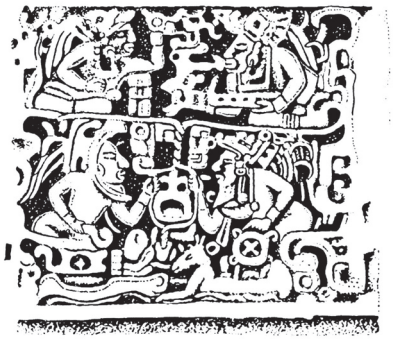


Fig. 4e. *Figures with birth rope flanked by skeletal maw,detail of Fine Orange vessel (from Lothrop 1936: fig.24).*

the Tzutuhil Maya of Santiago Atitlan refer to the rope connecting the loom to the supporting post as an umbilical cord (Tarn and Prechtel 1986: 176).

The pair of Goddess O figures seated at the base of the scene hold large basins. One of these women appears to be putting a cut gourd bowl into scoop up liquid contained within. This scene may refer to bathing or aspersing associated with birth. The standing Goddess O differs in several ways from the examples seated

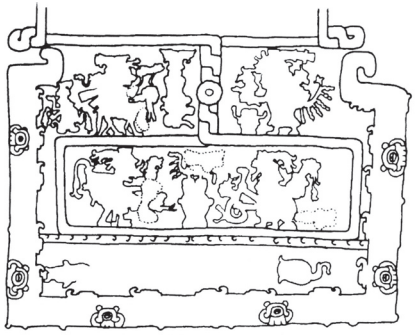


Fig. 4f. *Schematic drawing of celestial cord in U-shaped maw; mural from Tulúm Structure 16 (after Miller 1982: Pl. 37).*

below. She possesses a large Ix jaguar eye ringed by the "cruller" device typically found with the Jaguar God of the Underworld. Jaguar paws substitute for the human hands found with the other women in the scene. It will be seen that this same form of Goddess O appears on Side III, where she again faces an open serpent mouth. But although the Side II figure is a distinct, less human form of Goddess O, she still possesses the sagging breasts, snake headband, and cotton spool headdress found with the other goddesses, and it is clear that the two forms are closely related. On Dresden page 67a, Goddess O is also found with the Ix eye and jaguar paws.

Side II

THE BEARDED DRAGON

AND THE OLD GOD

The standing Goddess O faces toward a serpent figure, an entity first labeled as the Bearded Dragon by Michael Coe (1975: 19). The nose of the snake terminates with the Jester God, a curious but common feature of the Bearded Dragon. A small anthropomorphic figure emerges from the mouth to touch the face of the goddess, who in turn touches the figure with her paw. It is difficult to ascertain whether this illustrates a tender embrace or a struggle between adversaries. Although the significance of this scene is poorly known, it does clearly concern birth. In Classic Maya art, emergence from a serpent mouth frequently denotes birth, Houston and Stuart (1989: 7) note that on Yaxchilán Lintel 13, the birth of a historical individual is represented metaphorically as a figure rising out of a snake mouth. Two closely related codex-style vessel scenes illustrate God K emerging out of a yawning serpent maw (see Robicsek and Hales 1981: Vessel 142; Kerr 1992: 389). In the more elaborate version published by Kerr (ibid.), this event is epigraphically described as the birth of God K.

Although Yaxchilán Lintel 13 and the two codex style scenes suggest that the emerging Side II figure is being born, this is no ordinary baby. Instead, the figure appears as an old man, with a protruding chin and chapfallen mouth. This figure is closely related to a theme commonly occurring on codex-style vessels in which the emerging old man confronts a young woman wrapped in the coils of the serpent (Fig. 5); see Robiscek and Hales 1981: Vessels 8-13, Parsons, Carlson, and Joralemon 1988: 97; Kerr 1990: 2 1O). In a number of instances, this figure is clearly an old Pauahtun; the Side III example is probably the same god. Where texts are present, these codex style scenes refer to birth. However, rather than referring to the old emerging god, the texts refer to the birth of two bundled gods. Chae and the patron of the month Pax (see Stone 1988:83-84). According to Stone, the two gods are portrayed as swaddled newborns.

Rather than constituting the primary in dividual being born, the old figure emergng on the Birth Vase and in the codex style scene probably represents a god ritually conjured in association with the actual birth. The prehispanic Pauah-

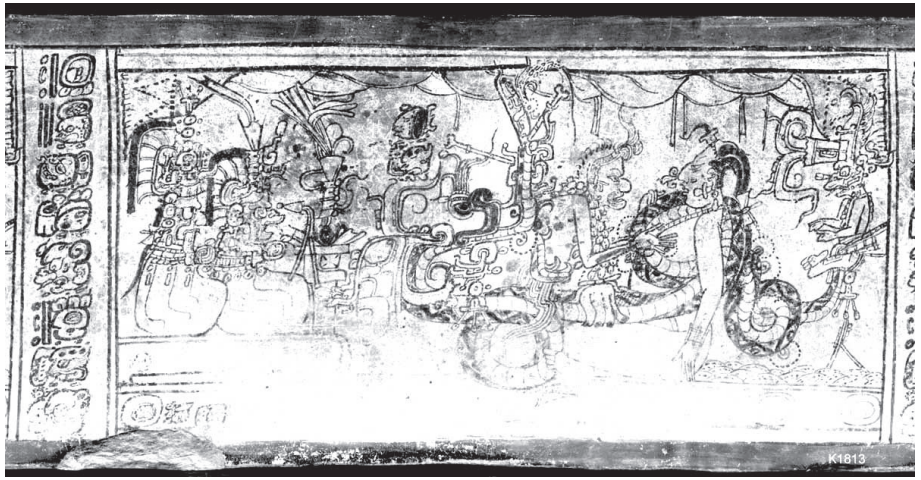


Fig. 5. The old Mani and young woman theme, here concerning the birth of Chac and the Patron of Pax. The old Pauahtun with his diagnostic netted headband emerges out of a serpent in the center of the scene. The pair of swaddled infant gods appear to the left, note burning bratzer infront of pair (Kerr no. 1813)

tun or God N has been frequently compared to the Mam of highland Maya lore, an old god of mountains, thunder and the sacred calendar (see Taube 1992: 92-99). Tarn and Prechtel (1986: 179) describe a Tzutuhil birth ceremony during which the Mam and protective female goddesses are conjured:

> At a birth, the midwife receives the Mam in the center of the house with incense and candles, and the quality of the reception and duration of offerings will determine the ease of birth. When the Mam is installed, the *ixok ajawa* (women lords) arrive, also known as the guardian persons (*chajalbe winak*). They come to receive

the child and are very much feared.

Among the Quiché of Chichicastenango, the infant is ritually presented to the earth god Dios Mundo 260 days after birth, that is. on the first Tzolkin anniversary of his or her birthday (Schultze-Jena 1954). The Side II scene of the emerging figure and standing Goddess O may represent divine forces summoned at the birth of a child.

In Mesoamerican thought, the birthdate in the 260-day calendar has a profound bearing on the nature of the individual and frequently determines his or her spiritual co-essence, often referred to as *tonalli* in Central Mexico and *way* among the Maya. Among the Aztec, the baptismal bathing of the newborn was performed on the day of birth, binding the infant to its *tonalli* determined by the 260-day calendar (see Sahagùn 195O-1982, bk. 6: 167-77; López Austin 1988, 1: 88-89). Among the Zinacanteco Tzotzil, the individual and the animal co-essence both come into being at the moment of birth. After birth, the Zinacanteco midwife bathes the child and afterwards performs a ceremony to socialize the infant and strengthen the tie to its innate soul, or *c'ulel* (Vogt 1976: 19-20). In the Quiché community of Chichicastenango, the naming of the newborn is performed by the midwife as she ritually bathes the child; this naming rite performed at birth is entirely distinct from the public Sunday baptisms celebrated in the community church (Bunzel 1952: 96; 154-162). Bunzel (ibid: 96) notes that the birth date in the 260-day calendar is an important means of determining the fate of the child. This is also true for the Quiché of Momostenango, where the 26O day calendar birth date still determines the spiritual co-essence and character of an individual (Tedlock 1982: 110). Side II may represent the bathing ceremony associated with the character and fate of the newborn. Whereas the seated midwives hold the containers used for the ritual bathing, the standing midwife is in the act of receiving the co-essence, or *way* from the old god. Although its relevance to the scene is far from certain, it will be recalled that the logographic sign for *way* occurs in the text immediately above.

The Tzotzil Maya of Chiapas have detailed beliefs concerning the origin and locality of the animal spirit co-essence, or *wayijel*.The Tzotzil widely believe that these animal spirits live in sacred mountains (Holland 1963: 105; Gossen 1974: 15; Vogt 1976: 19). Spero (1991: 188) notes that these spirits are frequently under the care of the mountain-dwelling Earth Lord, who merges with the Tzotzil form of Chac, god of rain and lightning (see also Hermitte 1970: 91). Among the Quiché of Momostenango, the Mam is the caretaker of the animals at the sacred mountain of Quilaja; one form of this being is a red dwarf possessing lightning powers (Tedlock 1982: 147-48). The Tzotzil earth lord, *yahval balamil*, and the Quichean Mam are contemporary forms of Pauahtun, a mountain god associated with thunder and lightning (see Taube 1989: 372; 1992: 94-99). The contemporary ethnography suggests that the Classic period Pauahtun, or an aspect of this being, possessed the *way* spirits as his charge.

Side III

SIDE III
THE JAGUAR SNAKE

Occurring on the opposite side of the vessel from Scene II, Scene III is virtually a mirror image. Once again, a standing

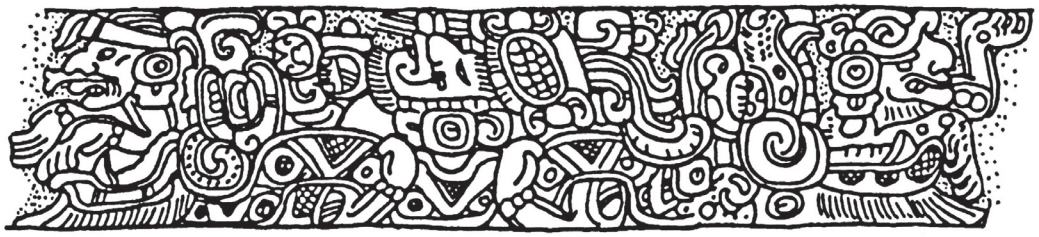


Fig. 6b. Maize God holding bicephalic serpent with snake and jaguar heads, Early Classic Tikal (detail of drawing courtesy of Linda Schele).

Goddess O confronts a rearing serpent. However, in this case, the serpent head has the ear and spotted pelage of the jaguar. Although the name of an important Palenque king appears to be Chan Bahlum, or "Snake Jaguar," images of jaguar serpents are fairly rare in Maya art. One example appears on a limestone censer from the region of Palenque (Fig. 6a, see p.661). Whereas one end of the bicephalic serpent is a snake, the other is a jaguar. The body of the serpent is covered with the curious folded cord device found on the Birth Vase serpents, and this figure can be considered as conflated version of the two snakes appearing on Sides II and III. A ceramic vessel from Tikal displays an Early Classic version of this bicephalic creature (Fig. 6b). Whereas the left head is the Bearded Dragon, the opposing right head is the Waterlily Jaguar, although here with the beard commonly found with Maya representations of serpents. It has recently been noted that this scene represents the cosmogonic act of raising the heavens (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993); in other words, the bicephalic serpent denotes the sky.

Fig. 6c. *Jaguar snake at base of codex style bowl (after Robicsek and Hales 1981: Vessel 48).*

A jaguar snake without the opposing bearded serpent head appears coiled at the base of a codex style bowl (Fig. 6c). This creature is quite similar to the jaguar serpent from the north panel of Building A at Cacaxtla (Fig. 6d). Here the jaguar snake is paired opposite the plumed serpent, or Quetzalcóatl, appearing on the south panel. The support the two warring sides appearing in the nearby battle mural, with the jaguar serpent being accompanied by a Mexican jaguar warrior, and the plumed serpent, a Maya bird warrior. It is thus possible that the jaguar snake denotes the western region of highland Mexico, whereas the plumed serpent alludes to the Maya lands of the east, the directionpar exellence of Quetzalcóatl. However, the pairing may go further, as Quetzalcóatl may represent the blue day sky and the jaguar serpent, the dark nocturnal hours. Of course, the

Fig. 6d. *Jaguar snake from north wall panel of Structure A, Cacaxtla, Tlaxcala (after Kubler 1980: fig. 3).*

identification of jaguars with the night and darkness is widespread in Mesoamerica, and the Mexican deity Tepeyollotl and the Maya Jaguar God of the Underworld readily come to mind. At Late Postclassic Tulum, the starry night sky is depicted against the background of the spotted jaguar pelt (Fig. 6e). Whereas the Side II side may refer to a dawning or diurnal rite, Side III may depict events occurring in the darkness of night.

THE OLD GODDESSES

It is extremely unfortunate that the region in front of the jaguar serpent has suffered extreme erosion, as it is among the most interesting scenes found upon the Birth Vase. Originally, two figures seem to have faced the jaguar snake, only the uppermost portions of their bodies are preserved. It is likely that they represent the two forms of Goddess O appearing on Side II, the human version and the more zoomorphic variant. As in the case of Side II, the more jag-

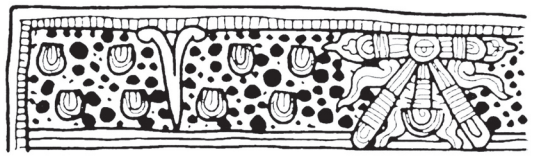


Fig. 6e. *Starry night sky with jaguar pelt, detail of a Late Postclassic mural from Tulum Structure 5 (after Miller 1982: Plate 28).*

Fig. 7a-b. *Water lily skull elements appearing on Sides III and IV of the Birth Vase.*

uar-like form is the principal figure confronting the snake. The jaguar paw of the goddess can be seen just in front of the snake's lower jaw. Her face, tipped with a tasseled nose bead, has a ringed eye and a red element curling out of the back of the mouth. As in the case of most of the Goddess O figures, she has red paint at the back of the cheek and a prominent jaguar ear above. This individual holds a smaller, more anthropomorphic Goddess O, who has the typical sharp facial features of the old goddess. She seems to be clutching an undetermined object, possibly a bowl or cloth, before her. The scene is unusually emotionally charged, and with their open mouths the figures appear to yelling, perhaps even screaming, at the jaguar snake.

Below the snake, a third Goddess O sits in stolid detachment, curiously oblivious to the events immediately above. This scene may represent a relatively simultaneous but distinct episode. The seated goddess holds a large basin in her lap and gazes intently toward an entity also found on Side IV (Fig. 7a-b). Her left hand is within the bowl, as if she is preparing to offer something to the form below.

THE BASAL ELEMENT

The device appearing at the base of Sides III and IV is a fanged skull sprouting two phallic-like elements, quite probablv roots of the water lily (Hellmuth 1987: 19 1, 36O). Although only a long red tendril can be seen sprouting out of the Side IV head, the example from Side I is supplied with a white water lily flower. The allusion to water is explicit, as the flowering red vine has the "stacked-canoe" element denoting standing water in Maya iconography. Although possessing upper curving fangs, the lower jaw of the skull is removed. Instead, the mouth has the red, lolling tongue found with the patron of Pax. A very similar creature appears on a codex-style vessel, although here the Pax tongue is missing (Fig. 7c). However, aside from possessing the curving fangs, "stacked canoe," and water lily elements, the skull also has the small beard found on the Side III example. Hellmuth (1987) has stressed the widespread association with the water lily with the watery underworld, and these water lily skulls probably denote a specific watery place of the underworld. Similar although more zoomorphic water lily skulls appear as basal elements in the stucco scenes of Piers C and F of Palace House D at Palenque (see Maudslay 188919O2, IV: Plates 35, 37).

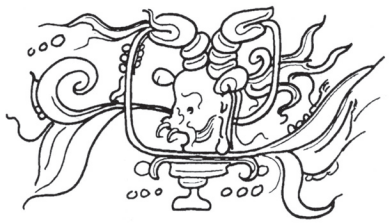


Fig. 7c. *Water lily skull, detail of codex style vase (after Robicsek and Hales 1981: Vessel 75).*

Fig. 7d. *Tonsured Maize God sprouting out of split water lily skull (after Robicsek and Hales 1981: Vessel 116).*

The Birth Vase water lily skulls are also clearly related to a human water lily skull, in this case with the lower jaw intact. In codex style vessel scenes, this head frequently occurs with the Tonsured Maize God, who can appear rising out of its cleft brow (Fig. 7a). In one vessel scene, the Tonsured Maize God substitutes directly for the human skull (Robicsek and Hales 198 1: Vessel 74), and it would appear that this skull is closely identifled with corn. According to the Popol Vuh, maize originated atpanpaxil, pan cayala, which could be glossed as "at the broken place, at the bitter water (Tedlock 1985: 328)." The frequently split water lily

skull could well refer to this underworld place. Among the Classic Maya, the term pax also signified split or broken, since the logographic form of the month Pax is marked by a prominent split at the top. It will be recalled that the bloody, jawless mouth of the Birth Vase skull is a trait of the Classic patron of the month Pax, and it may also serve as a reference to *paxil.* [7]

SIDE IV
THE YOUNG GODDESS
AND THE PAUAHTUNS

Unlike the other sides of the Birth Vase, the Side IV scene is broken into two distinct registers. In the upper portion, a youthful figure faces towards an old man, clearly the god Pauahtun. Although the breasts are not prominent, the young individual can be identified as a woman by her dress and long queue of hair running along her shoulder. She is richly adorned in jewelry, and wears a beaded headband, necklace, and wristlets. In addition, a spotted jaguar ear appears at the back of her head. It has been noted that she is probably the same young goddess giving birth in the Side I scene; her name glyph may appear at IV:A1

Side IV

In the upper register, the youthful goddess faces towards an old man wearing a bound cloth headdress; three other old men with simple knotted headdresses sit in the scene below. These figures can be securely identified as quadripartite aspects of the old god Pauahtun, who typically appears with a folded cloth headdress bound with a knot across the brow. The Pauahtun facing the young goddess holds a ceramic bowl containing two lenticular forms, one black, the other white, tipped with red. The objects are sacrificial bifacial blades, one of black obsidian, the other flint; in Mesoamerican Iconography, flint is often depicted as white and red. Another bowl and an obsidian knife are held by one of the Pauahtun figures below. The headdress worn by this individual is identical to that of the Pauahtun in the scene above, and is formed of pink spotted cloth bound with a red headband. The lower figure is probably the same Pauahtun, who now has placed the sacrificial offering in the burning censer.

THE CENSER

The three Pauahtuns in the lower register of Side IV surround a burning censer with a prominent beaked head. Linda Schele (pers. comm. 1992) notes that this zoornorphic censer is identical to the Quadripartite God appearing at Palenque on the Temple of the Cross and the Sarcophagus Lid. According to Schele, these heads represent the central place, often referred to as ol in Mayan languages. As an indication of this middle place, both Palenque examples have a world tree growing out of the center of the heads. It has been noted that the term ol appears in the accompanying text above, but it is also likely that the Side IV censer itself alludes to a central world tree, in this case the ceiba, the essential axis mundi of the Maya. Freidel, Schele, and Parker (1993) note that the spikes on the sides of censers probably refer to the thorns on the trunk of the young spiny ceiba (Fig. 8c). Although this is not to say that all spiked censers in Mesoamerica allude to this tree, many Maya examples do resemble ceiba trunks (e.g. Figs. 8e-f).

Clearly, the elaborate ceramic censer ap-

7. *In a similar vein, Freidel, Schele, and Parker (1993) Interpret the cleft* witz nal *mountain on the Tablet of the Foliated Cross as a Classic form of* pan paxil, pan cayala.

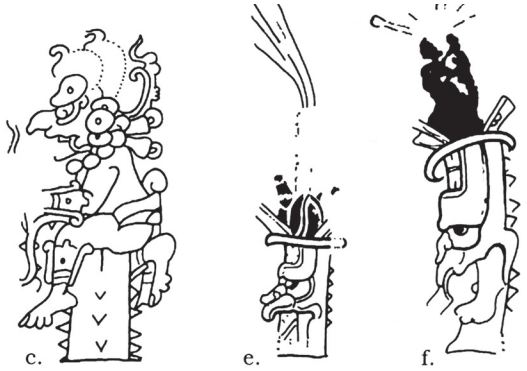


Fig. 8c. *Chac atop thorny ceiba, Codex Dresden, p. 30a.*
8e. *Censer in birth-related scene (after Robicsek and Hales 1981: Vessel 12b).*
8f. *Censer in birth-related scene (after Parsons, Carlson, and Joralemon 1988: 97).*

pearing on Side IV would not occur in birth rites of the average Maya household. Instead, it may correspond to a formal, ritualized form of the family hearth, the central place of the Maya house. Just as the rope hanging from the ceiling is the navel of the heavens, the hearth in the middle of the house marks the earth navel, the center of the world. Among Maya and many other Mesoamerican peoples, including the Tarascans (Beals 1973: 169), the Popoluca (Miinch 1983: 125), and the Central Mexican Nahua (Redfield 193O: 136), the after-birth is commonly buried under the hearth. One passage in the colonial Yucatec Ritual of the Bacabs describes placing the placenta under the central pit of the earth caiman (uhomtanil Itzam cab). Roys (1965: n. 127) interprets this central pit, or homtan, as the household hearth. Quite probably, both the elaborate censer and the simple mundane hearth serve as symbolic conduits to the Underworld.

Along with holding cut faggots, probably of ocote wood, the censer bowl contains a round element marked with a trefoil pattern topped or pierced by a vertical device tipped with long feathers. A markedly similar combination of faggots, bulbous trefoil element, and a long, plumed form occurs on Stela I I at Piedras Negras (Fig. 9a-b). Although somewhat eroded, Piedras Negras Stela 14 also seems to display the same devices (Fig. 9c). In both cases, the plumed element is centered atop the abdomen of slain human victim. Quite probably, this plumed form represents a the handle of a sacrificial knife, with the round element denoting the excised heart. A Late Classic polychrome depicts a very similar knotted and feathered handle on a sacrificial blade (see Coe 1978: Vessel 1O). In the aforementioned codex style birth scenes of Chac and the patron of Pax, there are censers containing the probable knife and heart offering (Figs 8d-e). In both form and content, the censers in the codcx style birth event scenes are clearly related to the example appearing on the Birth Vase, and here again human sacrifice is implied (Figs. 8d-g). One codex style bowl scene depicts the old god, serpent, and young woman with the spiked censer (Fig. 8f). Although the text explicitly refers to birth, a bound victim with a rippedopen abdomen lies at the base of the scene (see Parsons, Carlson and Joralemon, 1988: 97). In another scene illustrating the bundled Chac and Pax figures, an apparently lifeless baby lies in a bowl above the burning spiked censer (Fig. 8g). Since the primary epigraphic event in these codex style scenes concerns the birth of Chac and the Pax patron, this infant is probably a victim sacrificed as part of a birth ritual. Although not part of the codex: style corpus, a similar victim appears in another spiked censer; in this case, the infant has a long, hanging tail (Fig. 8h).

THE KEX SACRIFICE

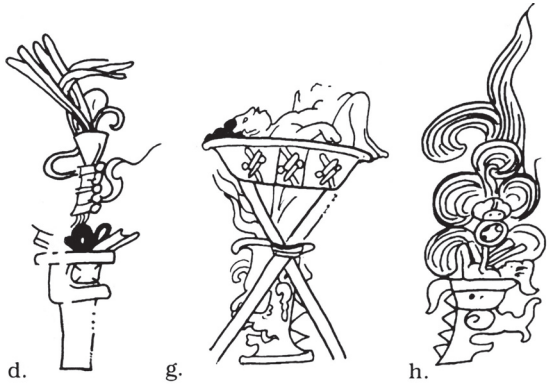


Fig. 8d. *Censer in birth-related scene (see figure 5).*
8g. *Censer in birth-related scene with probable sacrificed infant (after Kerr no. 771).*
8h. *Probable jaguar baby in censer (after Kerr 1992: 443).*

In Side IV of the Birth Vase and the codex style birth scenes under discussion, there is a curious combination of birth and death imagery. Side IV contains several representations of sacrificial blades, and clearly, the censer and victims illustrated in the codex-style birth scenes allude to sacrifice. The theme of sacrifice is reiterated and underlined by the aforementioned stelae at Piedras Negras, which depict what were probably actual people slain in historical ritual events.

The Quichean *Popol Vuh* and contemporary ethnography may provide an explanation for the role of sacrifice at birth. It will be recalled that in one Popol Vuh episode, the underworld lord Cuchumaquic discovers that his daughter Xquic is pregnant. The enraged father tells the owl messengers to cut out her heart with a sacrificial knife and place it in a gourd bowl. However, the clever Xquic tricks the underworld lords by substituting copal incense--the blood of trees--or her heart. Entranced by the burning copal, the under-world lords allow Xquic to successfully escape and give birth to the Hero Twins on earth (see Edmonson 1971: 78-8O; Tedlock 1985: 115-17). Side IV may show a Classic version of this mythical event. In the top scene, the underworld Pauahtun presents a bowl of sacrificial blades to the maiden, quite possibly informing her of the necessary sacrifice. In the scene below, this same Pauahtun seems to have taken the offering from the sacrificial bowl and placed it in the burning censer. Both he and his companions appear to gaze intently at the brazier, as if in rapture from the burning offering. With the acceptance of this offering, the well-being of the maiden and her offspring are ensured.

In the *Popol Vuh,* Xquic makes good her escape by presenting a substitution to the gods of death, referred to as a *k'exel* in the Quichean text (Edmonson 1971: 78, 8O). In many Mayan languages *k'ex* signifies I substitute' or 'exchange' and is also used in modern curing ceremonies to refer to the act of substituting a sacrificial offering for the patient. Love (1989: 337-8) records several such ceremonies, termed *k'ex,* among the contemporary Yucatec. The offertngs are special forms of ritual tamales offered to supernatural beings. Love (pers. comm. 1992) notes that one of the cited k'ex rites was for curing a baby infected with dangerous winds. Freidel, Schele, and Parker (1993, Chapt. 4) also describe a modern Yucatec k'ex curing rite in which offerings of maize drink (*sakha*) and alcohol substituted for a baby. In both of these sources, the malignant forces were believed to follow the offerings from the home into the bush to be buried in a hole. In both cases, the offering served as a virtual decoy for the endangered infant.

Forms of *k'ex* curing rites are commonly performed by the Tzotzil of highland Chiapas. In San Andr6s Larrainzar, chicken sacrifice constitutes one of the most important ritual means of restoring the stolen spiritual co-essence of the injured individual (Holland 1962: 254-255). In this ceremony, the black chicken should be of the same sex and approximate age as the patient and is considered to be a substitute for the lost supernatural animal companion; "the spirit of the chicken is offered verbally to the gods in exchange for that of the patient (ibid.: 255)." Although Holland does not use the specific word for this substitution, this is recorded for the nearby Tzotzil of Zinacantan. Here the sacrificed chicken is referred to as the *k'exolil*, and is offered to the under-world Earth Lord in exchange for the animal spirit co-essence of the patient (Vogt 1976: 78-78, 91-92). A *k'exolil* chicken is usually sacrificed on the sacred mountain of Kalvaryo, the preeminent home of the ancestral gods (ibid.: 78; Fabrega and Silver 1973: 183,

26 1). Within a stone chamber on the west side of the shrine, the sacrificed chicken is placed on a plate with its head facing east (Vogt 1976: 78; Fabrega and Silver 1973: 261). It will be seen that this position--head towards rising sun--is the same as for unbaptized children, that is, newborns.

One of the most elaborate forms of the Zinacanteco *k'ex* sacrifice occurs in the dedication of a newly created house. In this case the shaman makes an offering of *k'exoliletik* to placate the Earth Lord. Following the placement of the patio house cross by the shaman, the chickens are sacrificed while suspended from a rope in the center of the house:

> An assistant then hangs a rope from the peak of the house, the end of which marks the center of the floor, where a hole is subsequently dug. A number of roosters and hens corresponding to the number and sex of the family members are hung by their feet from the end of the rope, with their heads concealed inside the hole. With the exception of one black rooster saved for later burial in the center hole, their heads are cut off with a knife and the blood is allowed to drain into the hole. The bodies of the chickens are scalded with hot water and plucked and prepared for eating; their heads and feathers are buried with the blood as an offering to the Earth Lord. The shaman then censes the remaining black rooster ... He then buries the entire bird in the center of the "grave," head toward rising sun--the position of burial for unbaptized children (Vogt 1976: 52).

This contemporary house dedication ceremony evokes several previously described pre-Hispanic motifs. Perhaps the most striking is the combination of the hanging rope and the pit offering access to the underworld, recalling the combination of birth rope and skeletal maw occurring in ancient Maya art (Fig. 4). Just as the Zinacanteco house pit represents a deathly conduit, the hanging rope probably refers to celestial birth. Not only do the live chickens hang head down, the typical Mesoamerican birth position of infants, but the one intact victim is buried in the same position as a unbabtized infant. It has been suggsted that the classic juxtaposition of the sky rope and detah maw alludes to birth and creation, and this also holds true for the Tzotzil ceremony, which concerns the dedication of the newly fashioned house. To the Zinacantecos, this ritual probably has cosmic overtones beyond the basic house, since it will be recalled that the house serves as a basic model of the Tzitzil universe.

Like the subsitution performed by Xquic, the contemporary *k'ex* ceremonies are a means of tricking and assuaging malignant underworld world beings of death and illness. It is quite possible that the *Popol Vuh* episode provides a rationale for actual *k'ex* ceremonies performed at birth. It is noteworthy that *k'ex* sacrificies concern offerings to the underworld, the region of the *Popol Vuh* gods of death. Just as a new child is brought into the world, something must be given in return to the gods of death and the underworld, to maintain equilibirum

Throughout Mesoamerica, there is no more dangerous time for an individual than at the newborn stage. During this period, the infant is exposed to dangers both magical and real, and for this reason, the mother and child are often sequestered away for weeks at a time. The performance of k'ex rites could serve to assuage malignant underworld powers that threaten to take the spirit and ultimately the life of the infant. For most births, such a Wex offering could be food, copal, animals, or even the afterbirth [8] However, it appears that for the

Classic Maya elite, something more was required. It seems that in this case, infants or other human victims were offered to the netherworld demons in place of the endangered child. The Classic depictions of sacrificed infants carried by jaguars, death gods, and other underworld denizens are probably Wex offerings. Their frequent placement in offering bowls recalls the contemporary Tzotzil Wex chickens, which are ritually presented to the underworld in dishes as if they were infants.[9]

8. The Quiché of Chinique, Guatemala, carry the afterbirth in a bowl to a mountain cave where it is deposited (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993: 92). Although the details of this rite are not described, it may well constitute aform of k'ex *offering to the netherworld gods. Among the Western Mixe of Oaxaca, the afterbirth is buried in a graveyard; Beals (1945: 53) notes that in the past this was performed in conjunction with the sacrifice of a young rooster in a cave near Ayutal. Beals (ibid.: 9O) reports that this mountain cave is believed to be the home of lightning and wind, and also received offerings at thefinishing of a new house, for curing, or when a child was wanted.*

THE *K'EX* OFFERING AND MAYA KINGS

In the Classic codex style birth scenes, the *k'ex* offering appears as a human sacrificial victim. The same could be said for the victims appearing at the base of accession Stelae 11 and 14 at Piedras Negras. In a previous study, I noted that the Piedras Negras "niche stelae" represent scaffolds, and that much of the attendant iconography concerns the hunt (Taube 1988). Although scaffold sacrifice and the hunt are important symbolic themes in these accession monuments, yet another is birth. On accession stelae 6, 11, 14, the scaffold is surmounted by the Principal Bird Deity holding the serpentine birth rope in its beak, thereby identifying this structure as a form of birth hut (fig. 9a). For some time, Mary Miller (pers. comm. 1981) has identifted the victims at the base of Stelae I I and 14, as babies (Fig. 9a-c). Although in the actual sacrifice, adult captives may have been used, the victims do appear to

9. The use of human victims In curing is recorded for the l6th century Yucatec. Thus there are reports that pairs of boys were sacrficed for the allIng Juan Cocom, a principal informant for Diego de Landa (Tozzer 1941: n. 217). It is likely that these sacrifices constitute forms of k'ex *curing rites.*

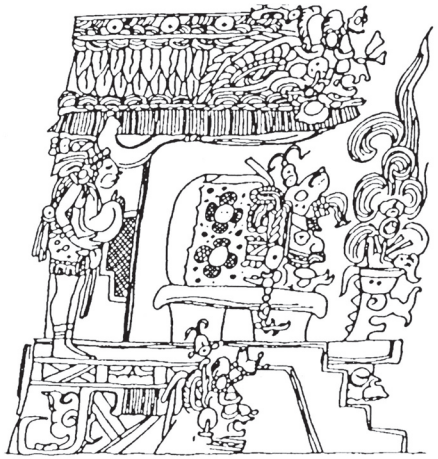


Fig. 10. *Detail of structure from Late Classic incised vase (from drawing courtesy of Linda Schele; color rollout photograph Kerr 1992: 443).*

be portrayed as diminutive infants, far smaller than the rulers enthroned above. In accession and other rites of passage, the participant typically goes through a transition from symbolic death to eventual rebirth into the new status (van Gennep 1960). It would appear that at Piedras Negras, the accession of the king was a form of birth, and as such, it required a *k'ex* offering.

On close inspection, it may be seen that the Stela 11 infant lies upon a spotted jaguar skin (fig. 9b). In the case of the Stela 14 victim, the spotted skin actually appears on his arm, as if he wears a jaguar suit. It will be recalled that in one vessel scene, the *k'ex* baby has a tail, and it is quite possible that this infant also refers to the jaguar (Fig. 90.11) The sacrifice of anthropomorphic jaguar infants immediately brings to mind the codex-style scenes of Chac sacrificing the jaguar baby upon a wits mountain (fig. 10):

(see Robicsek and Hales 198 1: Vessels 19-27, Kerr 1990: 220, 221; 1992: 450-451, 459, 485). These vessels are clearly related to the birth scenes of the swaddled Chac and Pax god infants, since their name glyphs frequently appear in the accompanying texts (egs. Robicsek and Hales 1981: Vessels 21, 27, Kerr 199O: 220-221, 1992: 450-51, 459). In a detailed study, Lounsbury (1985) identifies the codex sacrificial scenes as the mock sacrifice of the Hero Twins in the form of Gl and Gill of the Palenque Triad. However, not everyone agrees with this interpretation (egs. Coe 1989: 165-66; Spero 1991: 190-93; Kerr 1992b; Taube 1992: 24, 52). Coe (ibid.) cites a number of problems with the mock execution interpretation, yet another is that there is absolutely no indication that this is a mock sacrifice; in no scene is there any hint that the jaguar baby is brought back to life. Instead, he is being received by the skeletal death god, at times plunging head downward to be swallowed up by the underworld (see Robicsek and Hales 1981: Vessels 19, 24; Kerr 1992: 450-510)." The codex-style scenes of the jaguar baby sacrifice portray a mountain *k'ex* offering to the underworld.

Piedras Negras Stelae 11 and 14 portray the actual human corollaries of the jaguar baby sacrifice, individuals who plainly did not enjoy the immediate resuscitation experienced by the divine Hero Twins in their sacrificial dance. The remarkable dedication offerings underlying Copán Altar Q constitute still another example of actual elite *k'ex* sacrifices. The masonry pit under-lying Altar Q contained the remains of fifteen jaguars, including two juveniles (Fash 1991: 169-70). Fash (ibid.) notes that the fifteen jaguars correspond perfectly in number to the fifteen ancestral kings portrayed on the sides of Altar Q. Each of these jaguar denotes the *k'ex* substitute or succession of the Copán dynasty. It is possible that each deceased king was metaphorically considered as a *k'ex* sacrifice, an offering to the underworld that would allow the succession of the following king. Among the Yucatec and Tzotzfl, the two

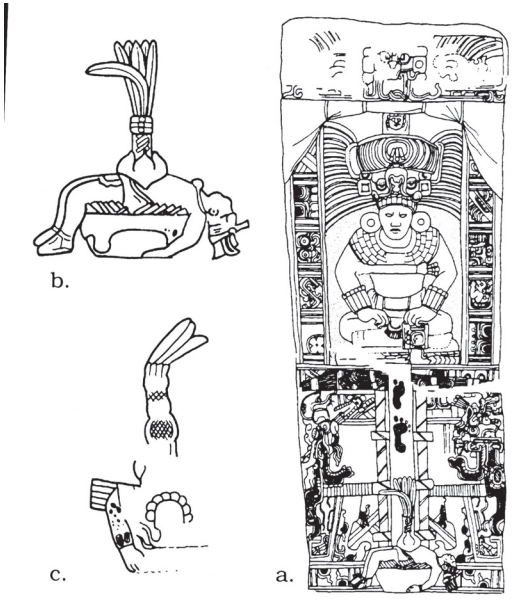


Fig. 9a. *Stela 11, Piedras Negras (drawing courtesy of Linda Schele).*
9b. *Detail of Stela 11 victim, note jaguar pelt and faggots within basin.*
9c. *Victim at base of accession scaffold, Piedras Negras Stela 14; note jaguar pelt markings on arm (from Taube 1988: fig. 12.5c).*

Maya groups with the best contemporary documentation of *k'ex* sacrifices, the term *k'ex* also refers to generational succession. This meaning of the term is recorded for Zinacanteco Tzotzil (Laughlin 1975: 19 1), and in Yucatec, *k'exul* signifies "*hijo, sucesor y heredero*" (Barrera Vasquez 198O: 398), that is, the child as the generational replacement of the parent. Carlsen and Prechtel (199 1) note that among the highland Tzutuhil of Santiago Atitlan, the term *k'ex* denotes generational change and succession. The authors point out that in the Quichean

10. This infant is placed in front of a structure that shares many similarities with the Piedras Negras accession scaffolds (see Kerr 1992: 443). Although more a masonry building than a bound wooden frame, the structure is topped by the Principal Bird Deity and has a sky band basal playbrm supported by S-shaped serpent heads and diagonal wooden beams, elements also appearing on the Piedras Negras scaffolds. Quite probably, this vessel scene represents aform of k'ex *sacrfflce.*

Popol Vuh, the spittle by which Hun Hunahpu impregnates Xquic also alludes to the concept of generational *k'ex*, since the Quichean word for spittle, *k'axaj,* derives from the same root as exchange or substitute, *k'exoj* (ibid.: 3 1). In this well-known passage, Hun Hunahpu describes his spittle as containing the seeds of death as well as life: although everyone born must die, life continues through the offspring (see Tedlock 1985: 114-15). This dual nature of generational change, containing both death and life is also embodied in the nature of *k'ex* substitution. Whereas Carlsen and Prechtel focus upon the concept of the child being the *k'ex* of the parent or ancestor, this is in terms of the world of the living. Bringing the newborn into this world also requires a replacement in the world of the dead; in this case, the deceased ancestor destined for the underworld is the k'ex for the newborn child. [12] The Popol Vuh explicitly describes both forms of *k'ex,* the engendering spittle of Hun Hunahpu, and the netherworld sacrificial offering by his wife Xquic.

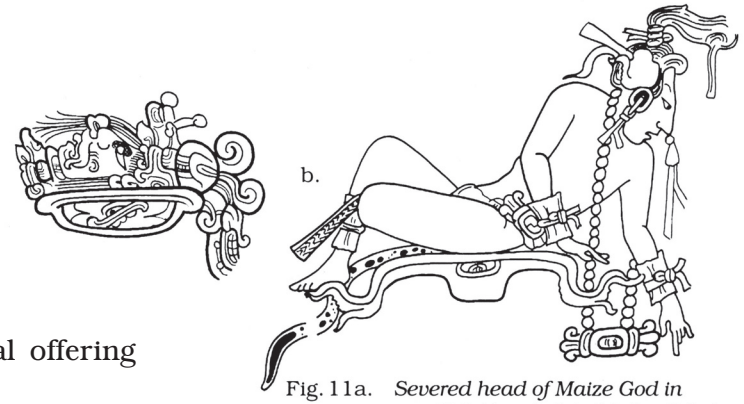


Fig. 11a. *Severed head of Maize God in sacrificial bowl, detail (after Schele and Miller 1986: Plate 75).*
11b. *Tonsured Maize God as the jaguar baby victim (after Kerr 688: 1989: 30).*

It has been noted that the Classic form of Hun Hunahpu is the deified personification of maize (Taube 1985), a plant which embodies both mortuary and engendering aspects of generational succession. Thus, like Hun Hunahpu and the deceased ancestor, the plant is buried in the underworld much like a *k'ex* offering. However, just as netherworld head of Hun Hunabpu contains the spirit of the Hero Twins, the buried seed contains the germ for future generations on the surface of the earth. [11]

In Classic iconography, the Tonsured Maize God is at times portrayed as a sacrificial *k'ex* offering in its journey to the underworld. On one Early Classic cache vessel, the severed head of the deity is placed in the sacrificial offering bowl (Fig. 1 la). Freidel, Schele and Parker (1993, Chapt. 2) suggest that the handsome, youthful figure on the aforementioned black background vase is the maize god (Fig. 11b). With his jaguar tail and ears, the Maize God is here portrayed as the jaguar baby *k'ex* placed within a sacrificial bowl. Villela (1989) notes that there is considerable thematic

11. One of the most detailed and explicit Central Mexican portrayals of the afterlife journey of the victim appears on Codex Borgia page 42. After being swallowed headflrst by the caiman earth, the victim is greeted by Mictlantecuhtli in the underworld. All three themes, the headlong descent, the swallowing by the earth, and the awaiting skeletal god of death appears on the codex style scenes of the Jaguar baby sacrifice.

12. An interesting version qf this concept is recordedfor the contemporary Huastec Maya. According to Huastec belief, the unbornfetus requires the death ofa living person, to be born. In some cases, particularly aggressive and dangerousfetuses can cause mortal illness to otherwise healthy individuals: "In order to develop and be born thefetus must gain access to a spirit already on this earth. At this child's birth, another must die. Fetuses can use spirits of those destined to die but some elect to take spiritsfrom those whose time isn't "up" yet (Alcorn 1984; 15 7). "

13. Carlsen and Prechtel (1991: 28) note that the agricultural metaphorfor human death and regeneration isfound not only in the Popol Vuh but also among the contemporury Tzutuhil. Thus the birth of an infant can be described as "sprouting."

overlap between canoes and sacrificial bowls in Classic Maya iconography, both constitute means of passage into the watery underworld. Either in his sacrificial bowl or in his canoe, the Maize God is portrayed as a slain victim in his underworld journey. An especially fine example of the Maize God as the *k'ex* victim occurs on the Sarcophagus Lid of Pacal (Fig. 1 1c), where the deceased king is portrayed as composite of God K and the Tonsured Maize God (Taube 1992: 48). Justin Kerr (1992b) notes that Pacal is here shown in the same position as many of the jaguar babies in the codex- style sacrifices. Lying in the sacrificial offering bowl in the skeletal maw of the underworld, Pacal is portrayed as the supreme k'ex, the underworld offering that will ensure the succession and survival of the Palencano line.

CONCLUSIONS

Since the pioneering epigraphic work by Tatiana Proskouriakoff (1960), it has been recognized that birth is among the more commonly cited events of Classic historical inscriptions. David Kelley (1965) noted that in the texts of Palenque, the act of birth extends to the gods as well. Recent work by Stephen Houston (1993) has enriched our understanding of the birth of the Palenque Triad of gods. Houston notes that the sanctuaries inside the three temples of the Cross Group appear to have been referred to as sweatbaths, or *pib na*, structures widely identified with birth rituals in Mesoamerica. However, although birth was clearly an important theme in Maya history and religion, there has been little study of the attendant iconography. In large part, this is because until the appearance of the Birth Vase, there were no explicit scenes of birth in Classic Maya art.

The four sides of the Birth Vase contain unique portrayals of Classic Maya ritual and mythology pertaining to birth. Side I depicts a young woman in birth position assisted by aspects of Goddess 0, the old deity of midwives. Standing upon a central, pivotal mountain, the pregnant woman holds the celestial birth cord with the skeletal maw of the underworld near her feet. The following scene on Side Il appears to illustrate ceremonies pertaining to the bathing of the child and the bestowal of the way. The significance of Side III remains poorly known, although it is possible that the Jaguar Serpent refers to a nocturnal event, with the scene below depicting an offering to a watery netherworld place. It has been suggested that Side IV represents a Classic version of the sacrificial substitution, or *k'ex* performed by Xquic in the underworld. It would appear that this Classic episode provided a rationale for underworld *k'ex* offerings performed at birth and other periods of life crisis.

Although the Birth Vase depicts deities engaged in mythological events, many of the scenes are strikingly similar to contemporary Mesoamerican birthing customs. The use of the birth rope and embracing midwife is still common among the Maya and other Mesoamerican peoples. The probable scene of bathing and the bestowal of the way on Side Il recalls birth rites recorded for the Aztec and contemporary Maya groups. In addition, many of the recently recorded Wex rituals contain parallels with Classic Maya sacrificial practices.

The many similarities shared between contemporary and Classic Maya birth practices suggest that birthing constitutes a very old and conservative tradition, one that appears to be shared in many regions of Mesoamerica. Aged midwives were probably common in Mesoamerica by at least as early as the Formative period. Joralemon (1981: 178) suggests that the old woman and infant theme in Formative Olmec sculpture may represent a shamanic curer engaged in birth rituals, in other words, a midwife. Clearly, much of the ritual lore surrounding midwives

did not end with the Spanish conquest and the colonial period. Instead, as practitioners engaged in the everyday necessity of delivery, midwives continued to perform their duties in the privacy of the native house. But although native birthing is a vigorous tradition continuing to this day, the ethnographic accounts concerning birth customs and beliefs are all too often superficial or spotty in coverage. What are especially needed are ethnographic investigations focusing on native terminology such as words for the birthing rope and such attendant rites as bathing and sacrificial offerings.

The significance of Classic Maya birth imagery is by no means limited to the biological act of actual birth. Instead, the ritual acts and beliefs associated with parturition were directly concerned with such profound matters as the origins and nature of the soul and the relationship of the individual to the gods and ancestors. The prevalence of the Principal Bird Deity and the celestial birth rope suggests that at least part of the vitalizing force or forces that we call the soul derived from the heavens, a belief also recorded for the Aztec (see L6pez Austin 1988: 207-10). However, the importance of underworld imagery and Wex offerings suggests that the individual was also directly tied to the netherworld. It is possible that like the contemporary Tzotzil, one's way derived or resided in the Interior of the earth. The practice of k'ex sacrifices is tied directly to the concept of payment and retribution, a recognition of a literal blooddebt to the gods of death. In addition, the concept of k'ex sacrifice seems to have also embodied generational succession in a manner similar to reincarnation.

As a basic and profound act, birth was also used metaphorically to describe such acts as the conjuring of gods and ancestors through bloodletting, royal accession, and even such abstract concepts as the origin and nature of the cosmos. In short, the imagery surrounding human birth was an essential means by which the Classic Maya perceived themselves and their surrounding world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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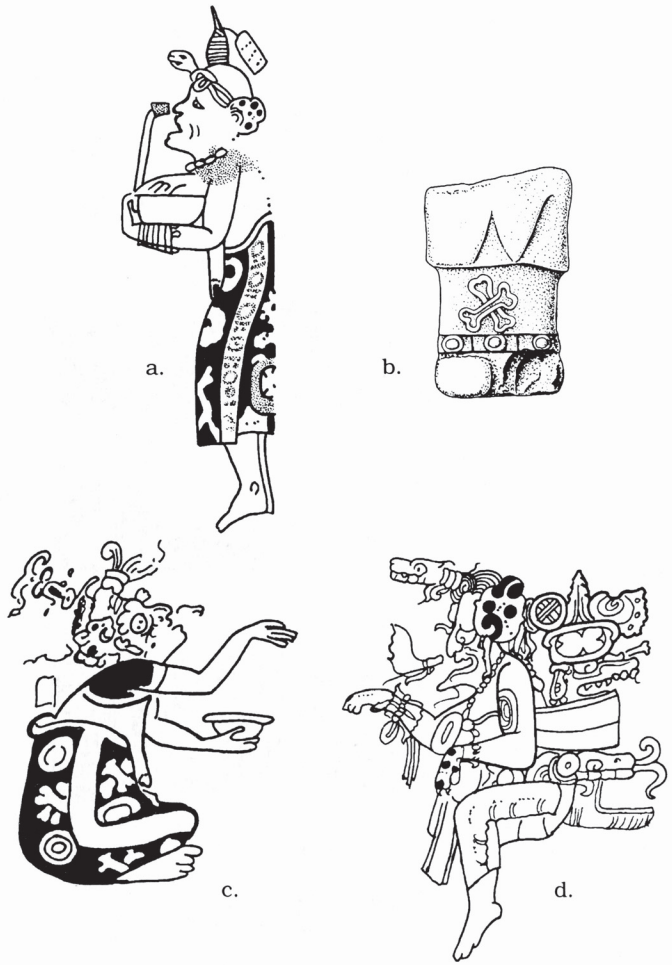


Figure 2

LATE CLASSIC MAYA EXAMPLES
OF GODDESS O OR IX CHEL.

a. The Birth Vase, Side I.
b. Stone sculpture, Oxkintok, Yucatán (after Rivera Dorado 1989: 125).
c. Detail of vase illustrating Goddess O as curer (after Clarkson 1978).
d. Goddess O carrying probable censer (after Coe 1978: Vessel 16 or Kerr 501).

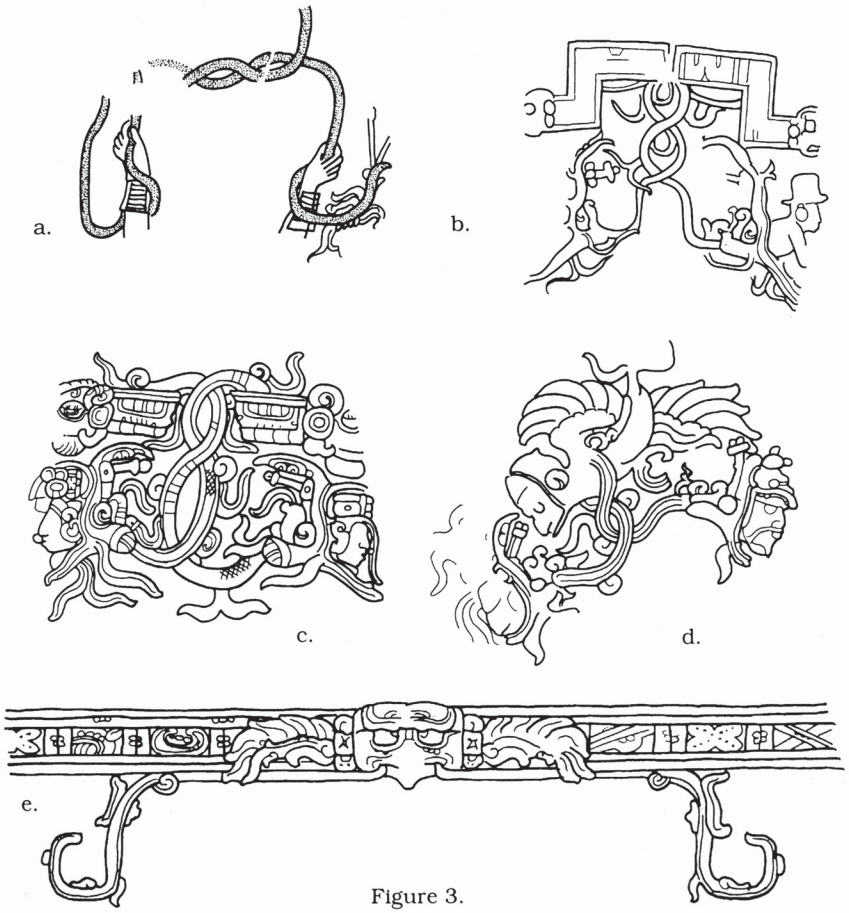


Figure 3.

THE BIRTH ROPE IN CLASSIC MAYA ICONOGRAPHY.

a. Twisted serpent rope held by young goddess, Birth Vase, Side I.
b. Birth rope suspended from cleft sky, Caracol Stela 3 (after Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981: fig. 3).
c. Birth rope passing through jagged cleft sky, Caracol Stela 6 (after Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981: fig. 8).
d. Probable Principal Bird Deity with birth rope, Caracol Stela 5 (after Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981: fig. 6).
e. Principal Bird Deity with birth rope in beak, House E, Palenque (after Maudslay 1889-1902, vol. IV:Plate 43).

Figure 4.

THE SKELETAL UNDERWORLD MAW AND THE CELESTIAL BIRTH CORD.

a. Skeletal maw appearing on Side I of Birth Vase.
b. Skeletal maw as part of Uayeb sign, Sarcophagus text Palenque.
c. Birth rope and skeletal maw flanking ruler on south side of Copán Stela N, note zoomorphic mountains within U-shaped maw (after Maudslay 1889-1902, vol. 1: Plate 79).
d. Upper surface of altar at base of Hieroglyphic Stairway, Copán (drawing courtesy of Linda Schele).
e. Figures with birth rope flanked by skeletal maw, detail of Fine Orange vessel (from Lothrop 1936: fig. 24).
f. Schematic drawing of celestial cord in U-shaped maw, mural from Tulum Structure 16 (after Miller 1982: Plate 37).

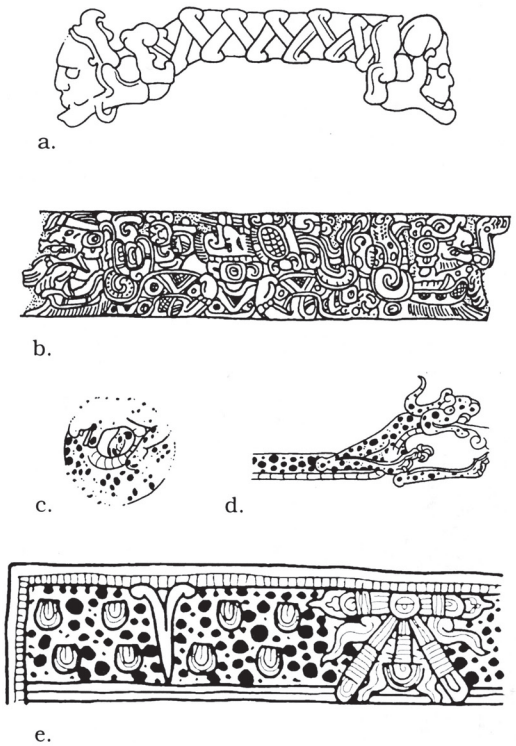
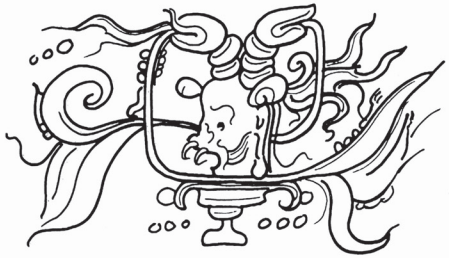


Figure 6.

JAGUAR SERPENTS IN MESOAMERICAN ICONOGRAPHY.

a. Bicephalic serpent with snake and jaguar heads, compare body patterning to Birth Vase serpents (after Easby and Scott 1970: No. 175).
b. Maize God holding bicephalic serpent with snake and jaguar heads, Early Classic Tikal (detail of drawing courtesy of Linda Schele).
c. Jaguar snake at base of codex style bowl (after Robicsek and Hales 1981: Vessel 48).
d. Jaguar snake, north wall panel of Structure A, Cacaxtla, Tlaxcala (after Kubler 1980: fig. 3).
e. Starry night sky with jaguar pelt, detail of Late Postclassic mural from Tulum Structure 5 (after Miller 1982: Plate 28).

a-b.



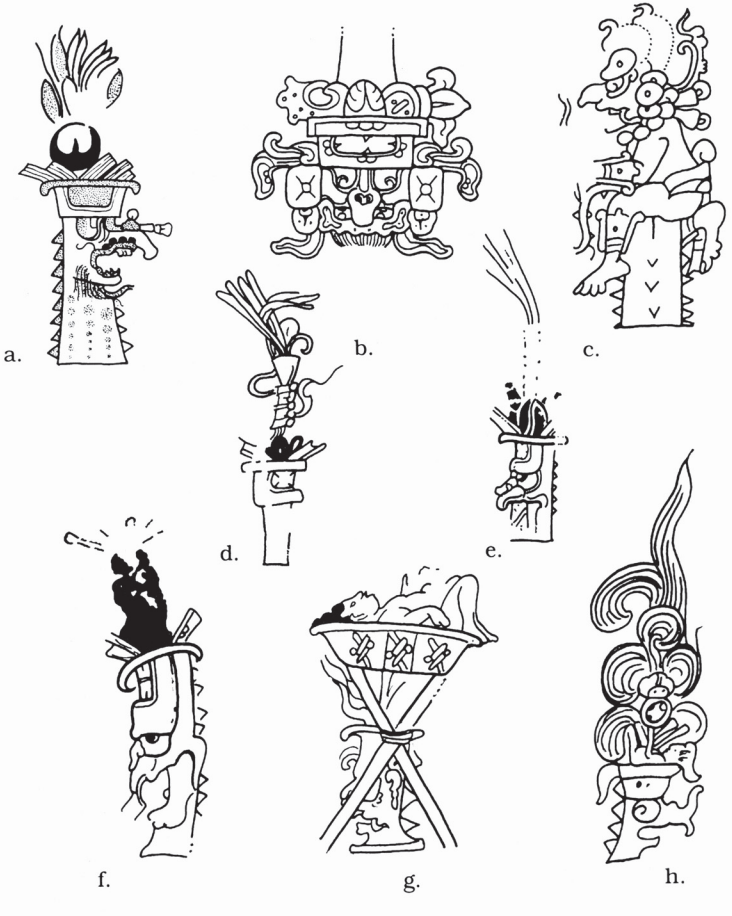
c.

d.

Figure 7.

THE WATER LILY SKULL MOTIF.

a-b. Water lily skull elements appearing on Sides III and IV of Birth Vase.
c. Water lily skull, detail of codex style vase (after Robicsek and Hales 1981: Vessel 75).
d. Tonsured Maize God sprouting out of split water lily skull (after Robicsek and Hales 1981: Vessel 116).

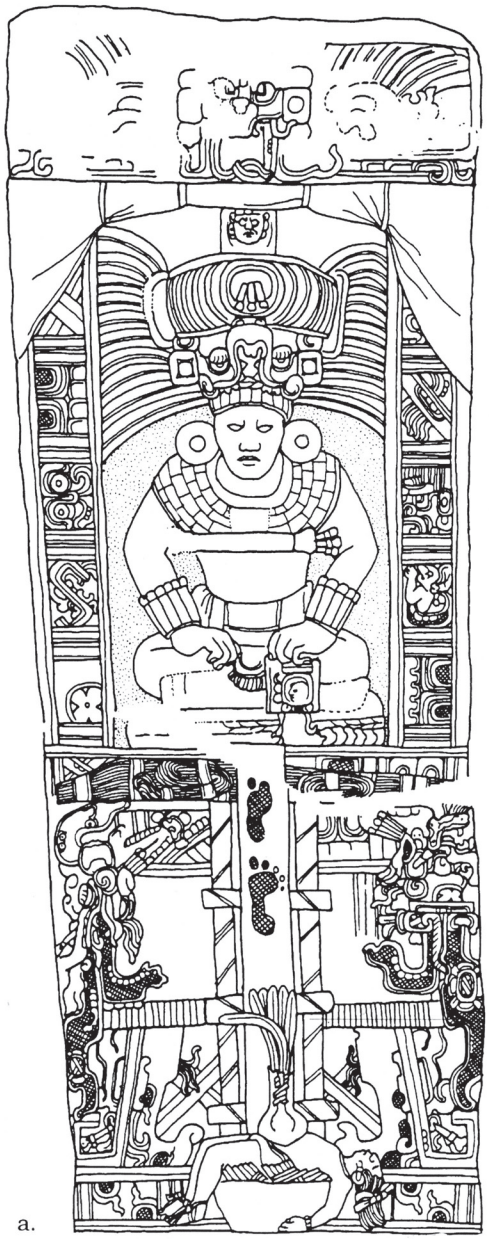


a. b. c. d. e. f. g. h.

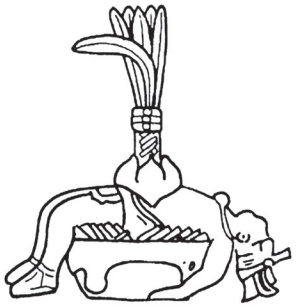
Figure 8.

THE OFFERING CENSER.

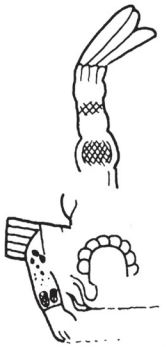
a. Censer from Side IV of Birth Vase.
b. Probable censer sprouting world tree, detail of Sarcophagus Lid, Palenque.
c. Chac atop thorny ceiba, Codex Dresden, p. 30a.
d. Censer in birth-related scene (see fig. 5).
e. Censer in birth-related scene (after Robicsek and Hales 1981: Vessel 12b).
f. Censer in birth-related scene (after Parsons, Carlson, and Joralemon 1988: 97).
g. Censer in birth-related scene with probable sacrificed infant (after Robicsek and Hales 1981: Vessel 17).
h. Probable jaguar baby in censer (after Kerr 1992: 443).



a.



b.



c.

Figure 9.

ACCESSION ICONOGRAPHY AND SACRIFICE AT PIEDRAS NEGRAS.

a. Stela 11, Piedras Negras (drawing courtesy of Linda Schele).
b. Detail of Stela 11 victim, note jaguar pelt and faggots within basin.
c. Victim at base of accession scaffold, Piedras Negras Stela 14; note jaguar pelt markings on arm (from Taube 1988: fig. 12.5c).

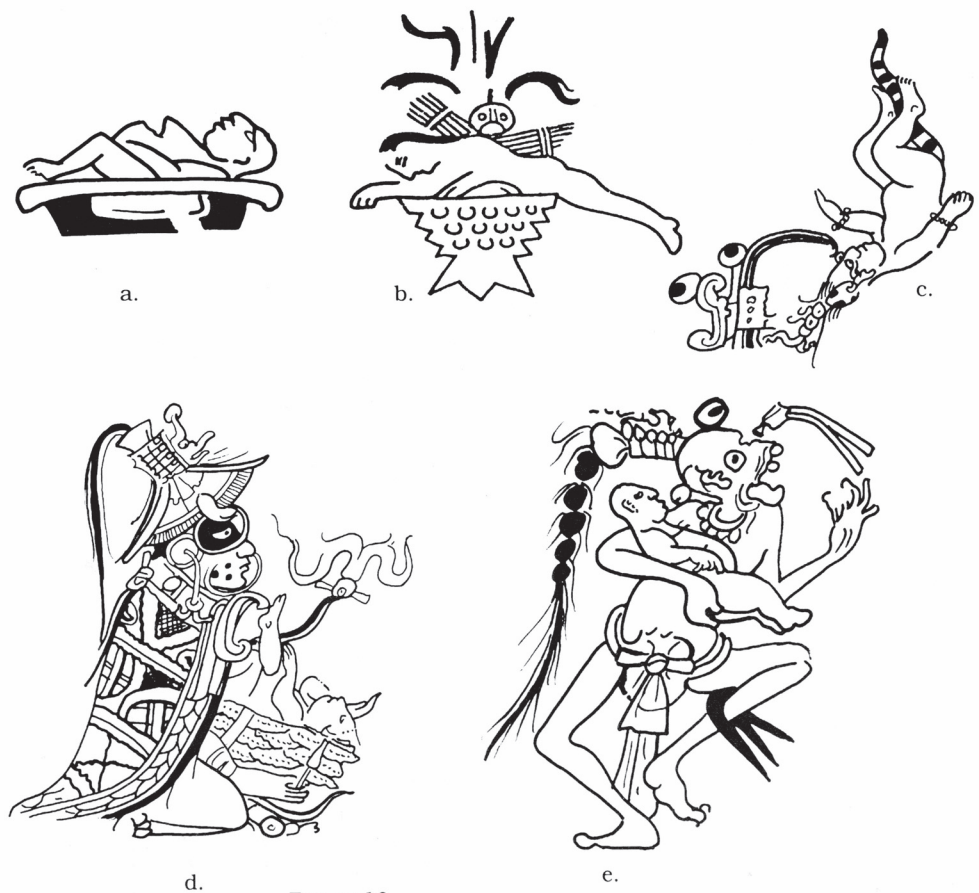


Figure 10.

CLASSIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE *K'EX* INFANT SACRIFICE.

a. Sacrificed infant placed in bowl (after Hellmuth 1987: fig. 63).
b. Burning censer containing victim and iconographic version of T600 sign, detail from painted doorjamb, Tohcok, Campeche (from Taube 1988: fig. 12.5a).
c. Jaguar baby descending into skeletal underworld maw (after Kerr 1992a: 451).
d. Jaguar baby placed in bed of leaves (after Robicsek and Hales 1981: Vessel 18).
e. Death god dancing with sacrificial baby (after Kerr 1990: 224).

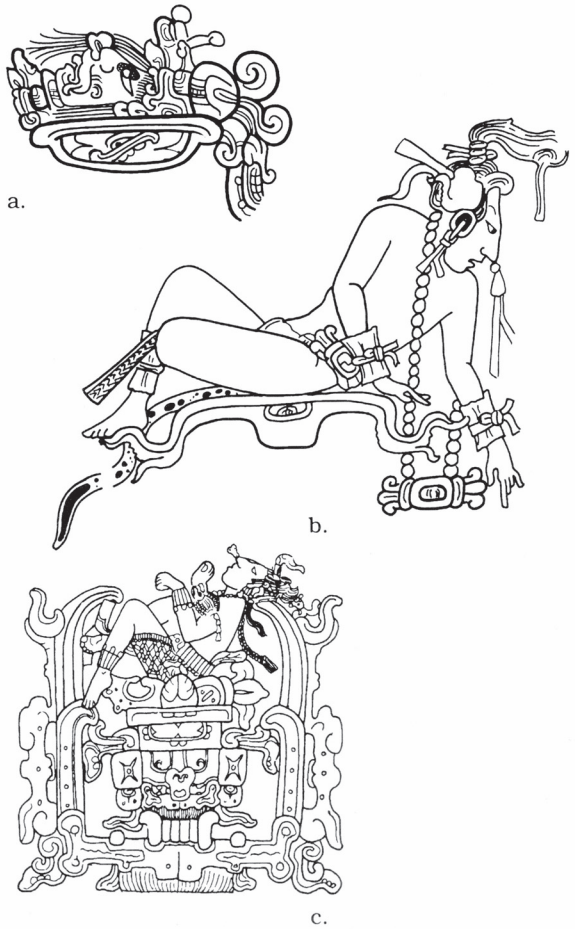


Figure 11.

THE MAIZE GOD AS THE *K'EX* SACRIFICE.

a. Severed head of Maize God in sacrificial bowl, detail from Early Classic cache vessel (after Schele and Miller 1986: Plate 75).
b. Tonsured Maize God as the jaguar baby victim (after Robicsek and Hales 1981: fig. 20b).
c. Pacal as Maize God with cranial torch of God K, detail of Sarcophagus Lid, Palenque.

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See: Kerr Vase Books: Maya Vase V4-2004 (1994), pp 688 - 723
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Papers Classic: 2005 XXIX Pot Glyphs (Long), pp 77 - 80

NIKOLAI GRUBE AND WERNER NAHM

It has long been noted that polychrome Maya vases abound in representations of dancing animals, gods, and demi-gods that often seem to reflect the fantasy of Maya artists. In many instances, these creatures do not match any zoomorphic or anthropomorphic beings in the visible world. Furthermore, these beings often combine human elements with the features of animals, or are anthropomorphic beings composed of the characteristic features of several very different animals.

When Michael Coe (1973) published the catalogue for the Grolier exhibition of Maya art, he realized that many of the texts accompanying the figures painted on vases must spell their hieroglyphic names. In the years following Coe's initial research, it could be shown that the hieroglyphic captions of the dancing figures almost al*way*s contain a glyph that shows a hurnan face half covered by a jaguar skin (T539 in the Thompson Catalogue). This glyph never occupies the first position in glyphic captions. Instead, the first glyphs refer to the creature illustrated. The length of the nominal phrase for such a creature can vary from one to five or more glyph blocks. The T539 glyph follows the nominal phrase, and the end is often marked by an emblem glyph, The occurence of emblem glyphs in these captions misledAdams (1977) in his discussion of the hieroglyphic texts on the Altar vase, as he interpreted the scene as a real encounter of historical personages from various regions of the Maya lowlands.

With the publication of a large number of polychrome and codex style ceramics it became obvious that the same figures occur on various ceramics, al*way*s with the same glyphic captions. This implies that there was a certain standardization, and that the shapes and names of these characters were not the result of an individual's fantasy, but of widely spread cultural concepts.

After it had been established that the captions spelled the hieroglyphic names of the characters, several, often successful, attempts had been made to decipher them, notably by John Justeson and Werner Nahm (1986), Nikolai Grube and David Stuart (1987), David Stuart (1987), Joanne Spero and Justin Kerr (1989). Thus the hieroglyphic captions associated with these characters can be given the same importance in the deciphering of Maya writing as the hieroglyphic names for the gods and animals in the Maya codices. The interplay between text and image provides a unique possibility of immediate control of newly generated readings.

Though it was obvious that the characters were supernatural rather than real beings, and that they were somehow related to underworld iconography, their exact meaning was not known until 1989 when Stephen Houston and David Stuart (1989) as well as Nikolai Grube (1989), independently from each other, deciphered the "jaguar-covered ahaw" glyph, T539, as a logogram for the word *way* "shaman, sorcerer, transformation, nagual, animal companion spirit." With this decipherment it became clear that all those creatures whose glyphic names contain the T539 *way* glyph represent "animal companion spirits," much like the "Naguales" still existing aniong various highland Maya groups and the Mava of YucatAn. "Animal companion spirits" are part of a belief svstem that relates

everv human soul to an animal counterpart. With its animal counterpart the human soul shares its fate and experiences (Foster 1944; Köhler 1977).

How Maya animal companion spirits were related to humans. whether thev were associated with individuals or with lineages, and their connection to toponyms and emblems is still a matter of dispute. Initially we intended to address this and other iinportant questions in the final part of this paper, but when we realized how large the first descriptive part had already grown, we decided to publish the interpretations separately, perhaps in one of the following editions of the Vase Book.

This paper, then, is our attempt to find all existing *way* characters, to list all occurences, find their characteristic features and decipher their names. It should be considered a working tool for future studies of animal companion spirits.

CATALOG OF COMPANION SPIRIT FIGURES WITH COMMENTARY ON THEIR HIEROGLYPHIC NAMES

This catalogue describes each *way* by its characteristic attributes. The *way* figures are grouped together according to their most important characteristics. The names given to the *way* are the Maya names. The names in quotes are the translations of the glyphic names. When the names could not be translated, question marks replaced the untranslated elements. For the transcription of the hieroglyphic names we have employed the conventions of the Research Reports on Ancient Maya Writing (Stuart 1988). The orthography used for Maya is the new official orthography of the *Academia de las Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala*. The *way* names are "glyphic Maya." We still hesitate to distinguish specific Cholan or Yucatecan variants. Besides the identification of the glyphic names, we have tried to identify the emblems and toponymic titles associated with each *way*.

The animal *way* are listed before the anthropomorphic *way*. The occurences are cited according to the most accessible sources. The abbreviation "MBD" refers to the publication Maya Book of the Dead (Robicsek and Hales 1981). "K" refers to the Kerr archives of rollout photographs. Many of the ceramics of the Kerr archives have been published in The Maya Vase Books, (Kerr 1989, Kerr 1990, Kerr 1992).

JAGUAR CHARACTERS

k'ak' hix "fire jaguar" (Fig. 1)

Occurences: Schele 1985: Fig. 2; K2942; K3924; K5367

A jaguar is depicted in red flames. The jaguar wears a red scarf and has a waterlily on his head (Fig. 1). On K2942 he is shown descending headlong, while on K3924 he is sitting in the flames. He is called *k'ak' hix* (see K3924). His toponym is spelled as *K'AN wi-tzi* "yellow mountain" (perhaps Ucanal) on K5367.

Fig. 1 (Schele 1985).

Fig. 2a K531

k'intanal"...sun stomach-jaguar" (Fig. 2) Occurence: MBD 33

Though this *way* figure shows up only once on ceramics, his name occurs often on monuments. This is a jaguar with the *k'in* sign in its belly, a scarf around its neck. and a waterlily on its head (Fig. 2a). The two glyphs that constitute his name are a vase turned upside down with a *k'in* sign infixed attached to the glyph *tanal* chest," stomach," (cf. Proto-Cholan **tahn* chest" Kaufman and Norman 1984:13 1); Yucatec *tan* "pecho de hombre o de mujer, estémago" (Barrera VAsquez 1980: 769), and a glyph showing a beheaded jaguar with an unidentified suffix.

The same glyphs show up in the long list of epithets of GIII in GIII's birth passage on the Tablet of the Sun in Palenque, as well as in Yaxchildn (Lintel 47, C3-133) in a passage recording the accession of the tenth king, on Tikal Stela 3 (C3-D3) and Xunantunich Stela 1, B I (Fig. 2b). In these examples from the monuments, the downturned vase becomes an ordinary *k'in* sign. The suffix under the beheaded jaguar glyph on Yaxchilán Lintel 47 is an unknown sign combined with the syllable *bu*, while in Palenque, it is a combination of *yu* and *Ia*. Perhaps these suffixes as phonetic complements want to stress the reading *bolay* "jaguar" ~cf. Proto-Cholan **b'o' lay* "spotted; jaguar," Kaufman and Norman 1984: 117). The occurence as one of the epithets of GIII confirms that this jaguar is an aspect of the night sun. The "Sun-stomach-jaguar" is a *way* of Site Q.

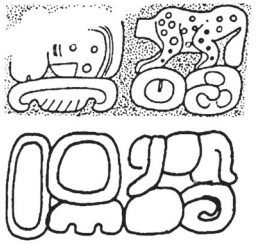


Fig. 2b *(YAX Lintel 35; TIKAL Stela 3).*

to ... ek'hix (Fig. 3)

Occurences: MBD 39,MBD 40, MBD 4 1, K2284

All examples show the menacing figure of a jaguar with a water lily attached to his head and a scarf around his neck. His body is entwined in the coils of a rattlesnake. Furthermore, several star signs are attached to the body of the jaguar (Fig. 3a).

His name is written with two glyphs; the

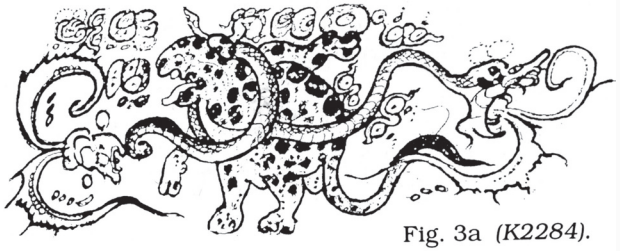


Fig. 3a *(K2284).*

second is the logogram *HIX'* Jaguar." The first is composed of four signs: the syllable to over a fist that holds a stone, a sign not yet deciphered and not included in the Thompson (1962) catalogue; the syllable *Ia* and the same star sign that is attached to the body of the jaguar. A similar glyph occurs as the name of one of the anthropomorphic death gods. Here, the same *to* hand-grasping-stone-*la* combination occurs with the glyph *mo-ko mok* "knot" (Grube and Stuart 1987). An important characteristic of this *way* is a stacked arrangerrient of bow-tied knots in front of the nose and mouth. We conclude that the *to*-hand-grasping-stone-*la* glyph spells a word like "to stick" or "to attach," and that the star sign or the glvph *mok* represents the items that are attached to the figure. Alternatively, the glyph could also refer to an object held in the hand of the jaguar, as on K2284; the jaguar is shown with a stone in the form of a skull in his hand. Unfortunately, the hand - grasping - stone sign is relatively rare in the corpus of Maya texts, so that it is difficult to test any reading. In the other contexts where it appears, it seems to be a logogram for a verb referring to the action

Fig. 3b *(Stone-hand glyph on the side of a slate sceptre, private coll., Brussels).*

Fig. 3c *(YAX HS2)*

depicted by the icon, the throwing of a stone; or perhaps a noun for the (stone?) object held in the hand. As stuch, the glyph accompanies *way* figures of God A' with a stone object in his hands as on K791, K5070, and the Popol Vuli bowl. The glyph is also written on the side of a slate scepter (Fig. 3c). In this context it seems to occur as the possessed name of the object, which is a stone to be held in the hand. The glyph also occurs with the suffixes *na-ha* in passages related to the Ballgame (Fig. 3b). On Yaxchilin Hieroglyphic Stair*way* 3, the glyph precedes *ox ahal eb y-ebal* "the stair*way* of the three defeats is the stair*way* of ..."; the three defeats are explained in more detail in the preceding text as the beheading of three supernaturals in prehistoric times. The hand-grasping-stone may be a logogram that refers to this decapitation event, where the stone represents the axe or blade with which the decapitation is undertaken. This interpretation finds confirmation in the scene depicted on K2068, which displays. aniong other things, a *Chak* figure cutting a huge cleft into a house. In the rim text, after the Priinary Standard Sequence the glyphs *ha*-hand-grasping-stone-*ma* and *ho-mi* seems to explain the focus event. The syllables *ho-mi* may spell the word hom, which in Yucatec translates as "cleft, chasm" while the glvph before probably spells a verb for the event of cutting with an axe. If this is the case, than the prefixed *ha* and the suffixed *ma* should be phonetic complements stressing the pronounciation of the logogram. However, the word *hom*, its meaning related to the actions described, has not yet been found in the dictionaries. Thus, the name of this jaguar *way* cannot be deciphered.

This *way* is attributed to a toponym. consisting of the glyph that various authors have associated with the "Manikin scepter" of the Yaxchilán dance scenes (for example, Looper 199 1, Grube 1992). Werner Nahm suggests that this glyph, rather than naming the dance itself, refers to the location where dances take place, perhaps on a dance platform. The icon with a pair of legs in dance position would support this interpretation. On MBD 95 the same toponyin occurs as a title of the subject of a *ch'akba* "beheading" event.

tzuk-ch'ok? hix "enema jaguar" (Fig. 4) Occurences: Hellmuth 1978: 188; Popol Vuh Bowl; MBD 29?; MBD 46; MBD51; K1973; K3312; K3924; K4922: Adams 1971: Fig. 56d

Fig. 4 *(K3312).*

All widely opened mouths and scarfs around their neck. As a characteristic feature, this jaguar carries objects related to underworld ceremonies and enemas in his hand or on his back. On MBD 46 there is a cup (with a fluid perhaps extracted from the large bowl topped with a human head in front of him), while on K1973 the object is a conch shell container or a enema syringe. On MBD 51 he holds a plate with an extracted bone, an eye, and a hand. On K3312 (Fig. 4) the jaguar is not shown with an object in his hand. but is vomiting into a bowl on the ground. The open-

ing of the bowl is covered with a small cup. Here, like in most other examples, the jaguar is dressed with a vomit bib. On the Popol Vuh bowl and on K3924 the jaguar is partly skeletal. The hieroglyphic name still eludes decipherment, except for the second glyph that includes the standard *hixal* 'Jaguar" glyph. and the prefix to the first glyph which is the *TZUk* mirror so often found in the Codices in connection with the iiames of supernaturals (Grube and Schele 1991). On MBD 51 the associated toponyrn is *k'ul chatan* "divine place of blindness" (MacLeod, Grube and Carlson ii.d.).

chlaktel hixnal "scaffold jaguar" (Fig. 5) Occurences: K791

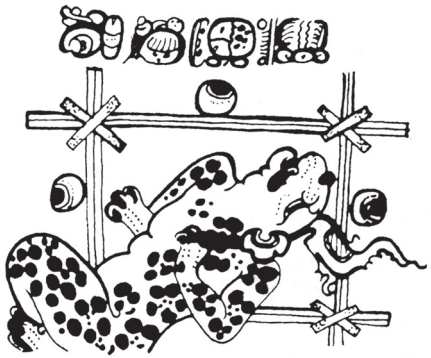


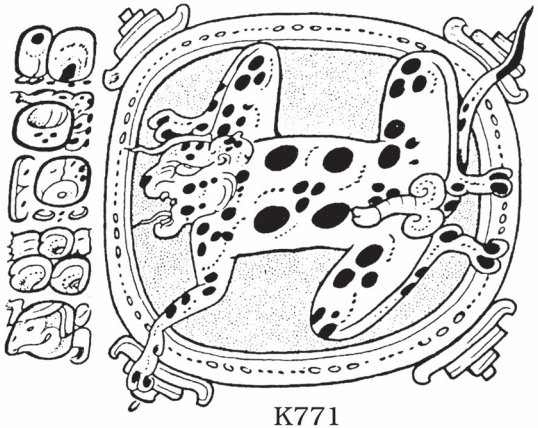
Fig. 5 *(K791).*

an lk-site artist (Fig. 5). The *way* is a reclining jaguar with a water-lily attached to his head. The eyes are closed as if the artist wanted to indicate that the jaguar is dead or in transformation. Most remarkable is a wooden frame behind his back adorned with "death eyes." The hieroglyphic name written above the scene in the second glyph refers to the jaguar as the main component of this *way*. The HIX sign here has a *NAL* superfibx that is to be read after the main sign in order to spell a derivational suffix of unknown meaning. The first glyph is composed of three signs, *CHAK-te-le*, We assume that it spells the word *chakte* "wooden frame, cage, bed" in the Cholan and Yucatecan languages (e.g. Proto-Cholan **ch'aK* "bed," Kaufman and Norman 1984: 119); *Cholch'aqte* "Bed," (Sapper 1907); Yucatec *ch'akche' "barbacoa, cama o lecho hecho de varas; armazón de palos,"* (Barrera Vásquez 1980: 122). If this interpretation is correct, it can only name the wooden construction of this important element of this unusual *way*.

Ch'aktel Hix is the *way* of *ah sa-yu.* Most likely, this glyph is a title based on a toponym say and the male agentive preff:x *ah.* However, a toponym *say* is not yet known in the hieroglyphic corpus.

naab/ha hix "Lake-Jaguar" (Fig. 6) Occurences: MBD 30?; MBD 138; Quirarte 1979: 8-2: K791, K771

Both examples show jaguars with open mouths and a water lily attached to their heads (Fig. 6). In all cases, the jaguars are framed by round medallions of water. This medallion is identified in the accompanying text with the "imix" glyph with crosshatched center that stands either for *NAAB* "lake" or *HA* "water."



K771

Fig. 6 (MBD 138, drawing by David Stuart).

Good arguments can be provided for both readings. In anv case, the basic meaning of "Great body of sweet water" is unquestionable. On MBD 138 another glyph is inserted between the "imix" glyph and the *HIX* logogram. it is a glyph not contained in the Thompson (1962) catalogue that seems to be a simple icon for "body of water," since it has the same dot-and-circle markings as the water frame of the jaguar. In most instances, a "Seibal" *ahaw* is the owner of this *way.*

Wutil hix "... jaguar" (Fig. 7) Occurence: K791

A unique anthropo-zoomorphic *way* is this male figure dressed in trousers decorated with black squares with a jaguar tail dangling from its back (Fig. 7a). The male figure has human hands but wears gloves in [he form of jaguar paws. His head is topped by a jaguar head. The underworld aspect of this being is confirmed by the death eves on the tail, the deaths-eye-collar, and the knotted penis perforator between his legs. In his left hand the figure carries a staff of unknown meaning. (Eds note: This object is a flute) In his right hand he shakes a rattle that is similar to those that are still in use throughout Maya communities.

Fig. 7a *(K791).*

Fig. 7b. *The* yo-ke *emblem glyph in Naj Tunich, drawing 88.*

The glyphs spell the *way*'s name as *k'u-i1i HIX.* Up to now, we were unable to translate the name and to relate it to the scene, except for the *HIX* "jaguar" part of it. Werner Nahm sugests that the superfix is not the *k'u* sign but the superfix from the "Pictun" glyph. On Itzimte Stela 5 this sign occurs after the syllables *ho-lo,* arguing for an o-vowel of the still undeciphered sign. This and other evidence is taken by him to support a tentative reading *sotil hix* "muscian-jaguar" for this *way.* Though the suggestion looks promising, it still needs better confirmation. In any case, he is the *way* of a *k'ul yo-ke ahaw.* This is the emblein glyph of a place that has not vet been identified. An emblem glyph with the same *yo-ke* or *yok* main element occurs in the texts of Naj Tunich (Fig. 7b) where it follows the "Site g" emblem (MacLeod and Stone 1992. Fig. 5-41). Furthermore, a stela from Aguacatal, a small ruin not far from Motul de San José, also mentions the same emblem glyph. On K791 the glyph *batun* is next to the emblem. Syntactically, it most likely represents a title. A *batun* title is often found in the inscriptions of Xcalumkin.

muyal hix "cloud jaguar" (Fig. 8) Occurences: K792

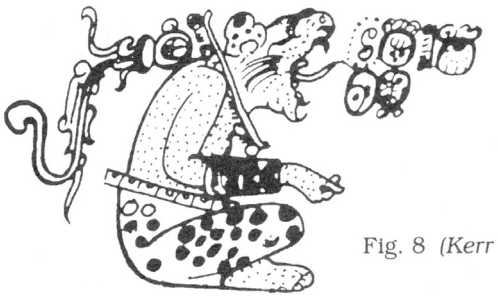


Fig. 8 *(Kerr 792).*

A seated male dressed as a jaguar and adorned with a death-eye -collar is called *muyal hix* "cloud jaguar," K792 (Fig. 8). He is the *way* of *wuk hanal/ wuk naabnal* "seven lakes place." *Wuk naabnal/wuk hanal* is a mythological watery location in which the dressing of the Maize God takes place before he is reborn (see MBD 82).

Hunchbacked jaguar with perforated chest Occurences: K1379; Madrid 41a (Fig.9)

Fig. 9 (K1379).

An isolated *way* in form of a jaguar is distinguished from other jaguars by a strange element, perhaps an *atlatl*, perforating his chest (Fig. 9). He is shown in dancing position.The five glyph blocks in front of the *way* are not executed very carefully, so we cannot read them.This may be the same figure as the jaguar perforated by a dart on Madrid 4 1 a.

. . htx "... jaguar" (Fig. 10) Occurences: Robicsek 1978: Fig. 145; MBD 3 1; MBD 32; MBD 54

Fig. 10. *An unidentified jaguar* way.

Each of the three vases show the jaguar with a water lily adorning the head and with a scarf around the neck (Fig. 10). The jaguars on MBD 31 and 32 are attacking a human being reclining on the ground in front of them. These two jaguars and the one on MBD 54 share the coiling bodies of serpents around their chests. Their names are preserved on MBD 31 and MBD 54 and consists of the main sign of the Bonampak emblem glyph that is still not deciphered (on MBD 54 it is doubled) as well as the glyph for jaguar, *hix*. In both instances a toponym was written after the *u way* glyph. The toponym, looks like the *ya*-sign in front of a head.

saw hix "?jaguar" (Fig. 11) Occurence: K3395

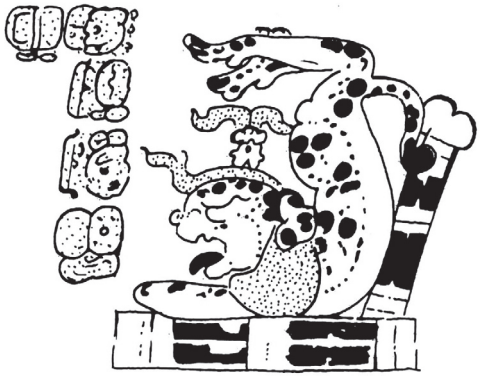


Fig. 11 *(K3395).*

A jaguar resting on his crossed forelegs on a bone throne (Fig. 11), is in the position of descending headlong that is often found in the Dresden Codex. The jaguar wears a scarf around his neck, and his head is adorned with the glyph *NIK* "flower" with vegetation emanating from it. The name of the jaguar is *sawa HIX-xi,* a word that, except for the second part meaning 'Jaguar."cannot yet be translated.The toponyrnic title reads *u-xu AHAW* "Lord of *ux*" and unfortunately is not found in any other text.

nupul balam "counterpart jaguar" (Mg. 12) Occurence: Altar Vase

Fig. 12 *(Altar Vase, Drawing by Linda Schele).*

Nupul balam is a man partly transformed into a jaguar (Fig. 12). His hands and feet terminate in jaguar paws, while his head grows into a jaguar head. He wears a black cape with a few white markings. He holds a large "*Ak'bal* jar" in his hands. According to the four glyphs he is *nupul balam u way k'ul* "Tikal *ahaw*, " the counterpart jaguar, the *way* of the divine Tikal *ahaw*. "

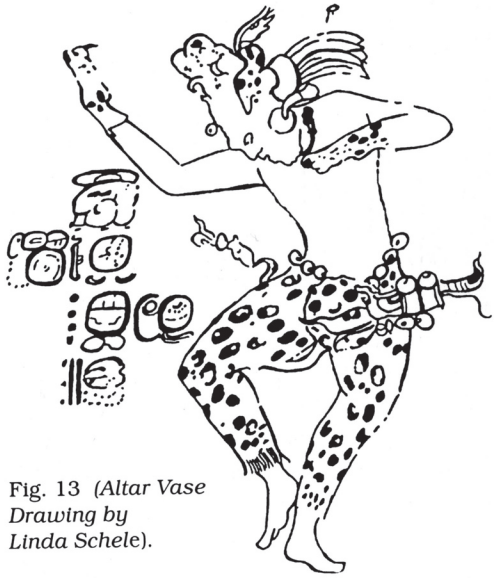


Fig. 13 *(Altar Vase Drawing by Linda Schele).*

chak balam "red jaguar" (Fig. 13) Occurence: Altar Vase

Unlike *nupul balam*, this *way* is a man dressed as a feline (Fig. 13). One can clearly identify jaguar pelt trousers and jaguar gloves, however, the head also grows into a jaguar head. He is depicted in a very vivid dance. His personified knotted penis perforator, because of this dance, is swinging to the viewer's right.

The name of this *way* is simply stated as *chak balam* "red jaguar" or perhaps "puma," since Aulie and Aulie give *chácbajlum* as the Chol term for *Felis Concolor* (Aulie and Aulie 1978: 213). He is the *way* of an extraordinary long toponymic sequence that includes *chan hab te oxlahun k'u* and possibly, the emblem glyph of Motul de San José. The *chan hab te* glyph finds it counterpart in the *ox hab te* toponym I associated with Rio Azul.

DEER CHARACTERS

Deer with torn out eyes (Fig. 14) Occurences: MBD 41; MBD 43; MBD 48b; K1743; K3312

This is a very popular, heterogenous *way*. In all cases it shows a deer with torn-out eyes (Fig. 14). Sometimes the deer wears a death collar; in other instances he wears a scarf around his neck. The glyphic name of this creature has not yet been deciphered. On the two vases where the name was written, it is now completely eroded. In colonial Yucatec religious texts like the Bacab Ritual *colop u uich* "tears out the eye of' is an epithet of creator gods. It is possible that the torn out eyes of the deer represent the same metaphor.

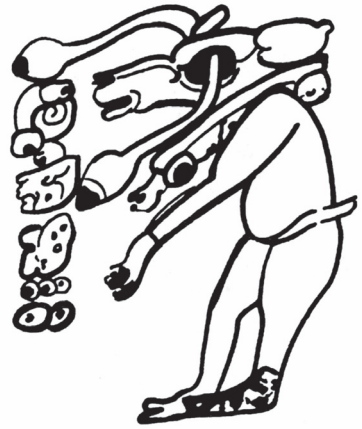


Fig. 14 *(K3312).*

chihil ... chan "deer snake" (Fig. 15) Occurences: MBD 3 1; MBD 33; MBD 34; MBD 35; MBD 36; MBD 37, MBD 38; MBD 40; MBD 54; Coe 1982:60; Schele 1985: Fig. 3; K4922; K1901;K2572;K2595;K3059

Fig. 15 *(after Schele 1985: Fig.3).*

This *way* displays great heterogeneity in the details of dress and attributes. We cannot be sure that all of the examples show the same figure. Variations in the glyphic name as well as of certain features could indicate that there is more than one *way* combining deer traits with those of a snake. In any case there is a large degree of overlapping, making it hard to distinguish between variants. All the chihil chan figures have in common features of deer with very long antlers and large cars with traits of snakes (Fig. 15). In some cases the ears show infixed crosses, or infixed T628 signs. In some examples, *chihil chan* is associated with a netted bag which he carries or on which his head is placed. The nominals of this popular *way* figure contain the *chi* sign (for *chih* "deer"), often a T60 *hi* suffix (for the final *-h* of *chih*), and occasionally a -li derivational suffix. The second glyph contains the *CHAN* "sky" sign. In between the *chih* and the *chan* elements, mostly attached to the *chan* glyph, is a sign resembling a twisted eight (Fig. 15b). In monumental texts this sign substitutes for the T573 *TZAK* logogram and is tentatively read as *TAL* (Chase, Grube, and Chase 1991: 10). Its meaning in this context is not clear; however, we suspect it refers to a certain quality of the snake.

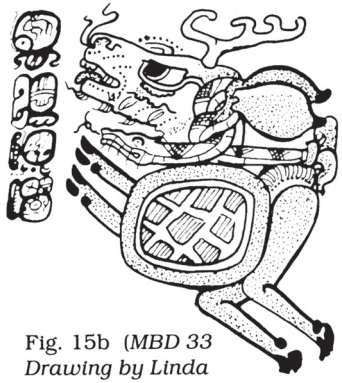


Fig. 15b (*MBD 33 Drawing by Linda Schele).*

In particular, the examples of this *way* on Codex-style ceramics add a prefix that probably represents deer antlers. If this prefix is added, the bent-eight suffix is deleted. We thought that this variant of *chihil chan* might be different from the ones without the deer antler prefix, but a comparison of the Codex style examples with the one from Coe 1982: 60, shows that both are the *way* of Site Q. Thus, we prefer not to separate the two forms.

On K1901 the deer is reduced to a head that is placed on the netted bundle. The bundle rests on a huge conch shell. Here, the snake emerges out of the mouth of the deer. On Schele 1985: Fig. 3, the deer appears with the head of a snake. The realizations of this *way* on Codex-Style ceramicE usually have in common the body of 2 snake with very large ears and deer antlers attached. Thus, sometimes the "main body" is that of a deer, in other cases it is that of a snake. The Codex-style *chihil chan*, shows the open maw of the snake and thc god *Wuk Sip* coming out of it. He blows or the conch shell that appears under the netted bundle on K1901 (Fig. 15c).

Fig15c (K531)

da Schele (1989: 147) relates this *way* to the great Horned Serpent of the Chortí myth and the name of the fifth day in the 260-day calendar. Among the Chortí, the four *Chicchan* are associated with the corners of the universe. Interestingly, *chihchan* is the Maya form of the Nahua name *mazacuate* (N. *mazatl* "deer," *coati* "snake") that is used by present day Peteneros for the large boa constrictor.

The *chihil chan* is stated to be the *way* of Site Q on MBD 33, 54 and Coe 1982: 60. On K2572 it is the *way* of *K'awil.* This can be explained by the fact that the serpent body is shown in this instance to be inside a ceremonial bar, and by the *K'awil* head in which it terminates. K1901 and Schele 1985: Fig. 3, connect *chihil chan* with a toponym that contains the syllables *hi, nu* and *la*.

mab ... (Fig. 16) Occurences: Altar Vase, K791, K792

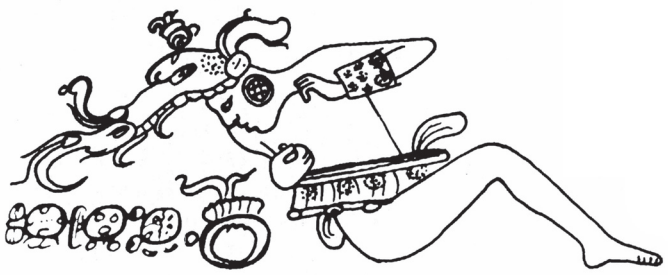


Fig. 16a (K792).

they share a head adorned with or in the form of a deer skull, everything else seems to be different (Fig. 16a). The *way* on the Altar Vase is covered by a black cape and the *way* on K792 occupies a strange position as if he could be falling.

The name of the creature on the Altar vase is *CHAK.-la u CHIH?-la* "red ... is this deer." Here, an iconic logogram spells the word for deer. The main sign of the first glyph looks like T519 with a T74 *ma* infix. There is some evidence that T519 represents the syllable *bo*, resulting in a reading *mab* of the first part of the name. The reading of the name of the *way* on K791 still remains opaque. On K792, the *ma* is written before the T519 main sign. The second glyph, *u-?-la* could be a scribal variant of the second glyph in the name on the Altar Vase.

The name of the *way* on K791 which looks like a monkey with a deer skull headdress is written *ma-bi* (Fig. 16b). Perhaps these two phonetic signs spell the Yucatec root *mab* which shows up in compounds like *mabtsi*l "abominable" and *(ah) mab yum "atrevido y que menosprecia, niega o desconoce a*

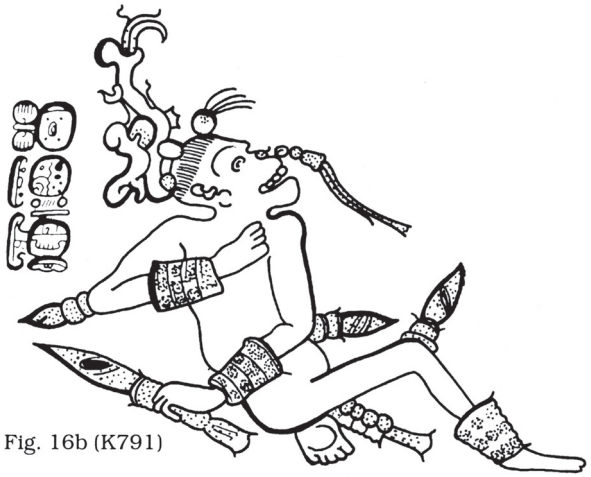


Fig. 16b (K791)

sus padres o que no los obedece" (Barrera Vdsquez 1980: 473). Alternatively, one might ask whether *mab* is the short form of *manab "visión o fantasma, duende, trasgo, espectro, fantasma"* (Barrera Vdsquez 1980: 494).

On K791, *mab* is the *way* of *na ho chan,* the dark place of creation where the two paddler gods are located (Schele 1992). The *mab way* of the Altar Vase is associated with an unknown emblem, and the *way* of K792 is the *way* of a *k'ul Tikal ahaw* (fig. 16a). Taking into account the different names and the variations in the toponyms one might indeed prefer to separate the individuals listed together here.

... chih "deer with foliage in its mouth" (Fig. 17) Occurences: Sotheby's 1986; Robicsek 1978: Fig. 145; Quirarte 8-6; Coe 1982: 60; K2023; K3061; K3459; K5017; Actun Balam Vase

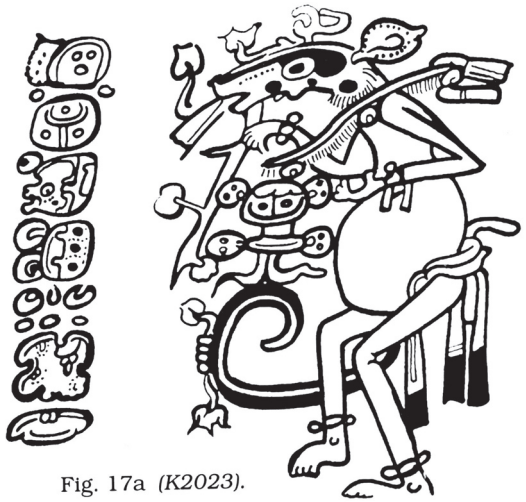


Fig. 17a *(K2023).*

Again, this is a *way* with great variation. It shows a deer body with an extremely long coiled tail. In all but two cases the head is also that of a deer (Fig. 17a). Only on Coe 1982:60 and Quirarte Fig. 8-6, the creature has the head of a spider monkey. Obviously the long tail of the other examples is part of the spider monkey element of this *way* as well. When the *way* has a deer head, the deer holds clasped in its mouth a curious sort of plant or foliage.

The nominals of this *way* on K2023 and the Sotheby's vase are very similar: they start with an unknown sign preceding another sign with three or four circles in its center. Eventually this is the T537 allograph of the *na* sign. On K2023, a large *la* sign is written under this glyph, probably in order to represent the -l nominal suffix. They differ, however, in the last part of the name; on the Sotheby's vase it is the *chi* sign for *chih* "deer," while on K2023 it is the head of a monkey. This difference shows that this *way* is a combination of deer and monkey. On K3459 the nominals could be the same but executed with less care.

K2023 and the Sotheby's vase associate this *way* with the *ox witz* toponym of Caracol (Chase, Grube and Chase 1992). On K3459 the toponym is spelled with a number three in front of a different main sign. If the same toponym is represented, it should be a scribal variant for the *WITZ* "hill" logogram.

The *way* of K927 (fig. l7b) is different

Fig. 17b (Coe 1982: 60).

from the other ones as the head clearly is that of a monkey. The body of this *way* is of a deer, but the tail again is monkey-like and not that of a deer. The first glyph in the name has an unknown main sign and probably a T4 *na* and a *la* suffix, arguing for a reading *-nal*. The second glyph is the head of a monkey. Finally, the toponym again can be identified as the *ox witz* Caracol toponym. The monkey-deer creature also occurs on Quirarte 1979: 8-6 with a cacao pod in its hand, but the published photograph unfortunately does not allow the reading of the associated glyphs.

MONKEYS

och maax ..."spider monkey" (Fig. 18)

Occurences: Clarkson 1978: Fig. 11 Quirarte 1979: 8-9; MBD 47, MBD 4~ MBD 48a, MBD 48b, K2010; K3198

Fig. 18 (K2010).

All examples of this *way* show very realistic spider monkeys with deer antlers attached to their heads (Fig. 18). Characteristic for spider monkeys is the long tail. Here the tail is adorned with a series of knots. The ears have crossed bands infixed, or have one of Landa's *u* signs. In some examples, a kind of bundle hangs down from the end of the tail. This and other examples show the spider monkey with a plate in his hands that contains torn out human body parts.

The hieroglyphic captions call this spider monkey *och max*. While *max* is the common word for spider monkey in most Maya languages (Stuart 1987: 31-33), the translation of och remains problematic.

In the Yucatecan languages, *och* translates as "opossum" and "food," while in Cholan, *och* is the root for the verb "to enter." None of these meanings can be linked to the picture. *Och max* is the *way* of an *ahaw* of an unknown place. The glyph for this place consists of a *ta* prefix before an unreadable head.

yuch' maax "head louse spider monkey" Occurences: Coe 1982:58

Fig. 19 *(Coe 1982; 58).*

This dancing spider monkey occurs only on one vase (Coe 1982: 58) (Fig. 19). He wears paper wristles and anklets, along with a sacrificial scarf. The glyphic caption unfortunately is only partially preserved. The third glyph in the phrase is Stuart's (1987: 31-33) *max* "spider monkey" glyph. The first glyph is too eroded to be identified. The second consists of the syllables *yu* and *ch'a*, perhaps spelling a word like *yuch'*, probably the possessed form of Cholan *uch* "'head louse" (Kaufman and Norman 1984: 135). That this spider monkey scratches his head with his left (and probably also the right) hand certainly is due to the

head lice. He is the *way* of an unknown place, of which the second element is a sign for the vowel *a*.

k'in to ... batz'"...howler monkey" (Fig. 20) Dccurences: Robicsek 1978: Fig. 145; Schele 1985: Fig. 3; K1743; K3459;K5070

Fig. 20 *(after Schele 1985:Fig.3).*

The two howler monkeys drawn on K5070 and Schele 1985:Fig. 3, are so similar in execution and every detail that one wonders whether both vases were painted by the same artist, a suspicion that finds confirmation if one compares the very similar Primary Standard Sequences.

Both howler monkeys are dressed with scarves around their necks (Fig. 20), hold cacao pods in their right hands and have long coiled tails. They are naked so their penises are visible.

The howler monkeys on K1743 and K3459 differ, mostly because of their less careful execution. In his left raised hand, the howler monkey of K 1743 holds a black element which is difficult to interpret, while the monkey on K3459 again holds a long object that also seems to terminate in a cacao pod.

On Schele 1985: Fig. 3, the howler monkey is addressed as *k'in to ... batz'* "sun ... howler monkey." *Batz'* in Tzeltalan, Cholan, and the Yucatecan languages, means howler monkey. The word *batz'*on K5070 is written with the phonetic complement *ba* in front of a portrait sign that represents the head of a howler monkey. On Schele 1985: Fig. 3, a glyph precedes the word *batz'* that consists of the syllable *to* over the body of a decapitated jaguar, similar to the jaguar with the name of *k'intanal balam* (see above). On K 1743 the sun and this jaguar body without the to superfix (obviously a phonetic complement indicating the reading of the jaguar body) identify the monkey rather than the *batz'* glyph. Finally, the example from K3459 is identified by a glyphic caption identical to the others except for the *to* sign over the beheaded jaguar, here replaced with a sign resembling the *Kumk'u* superfix.

Only on K5070 are the glyphs well enough executed to enable the visual identification of the toponym. Here, the howler monkey is stated to be the *way* of a toponym. that combines the syllable *ya* with a main sign that merges the "Imix" main sign with the *KIN* sign. Though his particular sign (probably a new syllable and not simply *ba-k'in)* is found often as a title, it does not occur anywhere else with a *ya* prefix.

OTHER ANIMALS

sak ox ok "three white dogs" (Fig. 21) Occurences: Coe 1982: 60; MBD 32; MBD 46?; K791; K3844

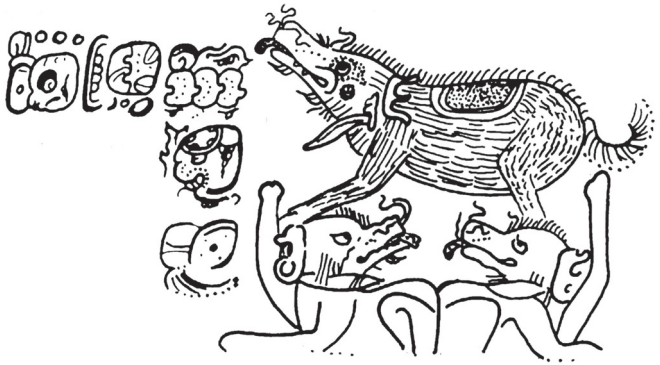


Fig. 21 *(Coe 1982: 60).* K927

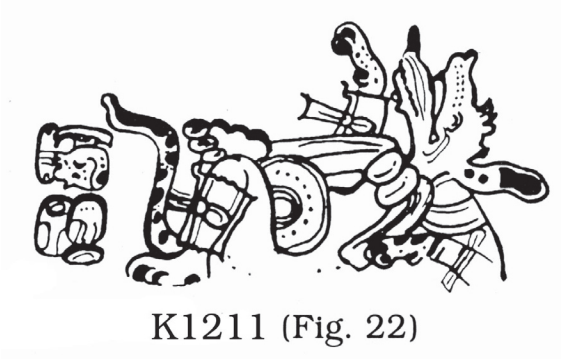
This *way* shows up in very different manifestations that are related by the shared glyphic names and certain dog features (Fig. 2 1). On Coe 1982: 60, a group of three hairy dogs with flint blades in their ears is called *sak ox ok.* While the upper dog is large, the two lower ones are small and are sitting back to back, (eds. note: copulating) only the faces turned to each other. The large dog has black markings around the eye and a black spot on its back. On K791 we see a dancer with trousers thal seem to be made from the skin of a dog. Furthermore, his headdress is the head of a dog. The motion of this dancer is supported by the dangling personified penis perforator visible in front of his loincloth. Finally, K3844 shows a dog with a human body, dressed in a large cape, holding an axe and a *Cauac* knife.

The name *sak ox ok* translates as "three white dogs." Thompson (1950:78) associated the Yucatecan name for the tenth day (*ok*) with the Eastern Maya name *tz'i*. which also means "dog." He pointed out that in a 1937 vocabulary, Becerra recorded *ok* as a Palencano Chol name for "dog," while warning that Becerra did not distinguish between the simple and glottalized k. However, the *ki* phonetic complement on K791 proves that there existed a Cholan word *ok* for "dog" with an unglottalized k. The combination of the number three with the word *ok* also occurs as a positive augury in the Codices (Zimmermann 1956:23, Tafel 6). Probably this augury is based on the Yucatec numeral classifier *ok* 11 *almuerza*," (note *ok "almuerza," "que es lo que cabe en el pufio vuelta la palma para arriba," hun ok Lxl'im, ka' ok, oxok*, etcetera, *"un puhado o almuerzo asi de maiz,"* B a r r e r a Vdsquez 1980:595). *Sak ok*, commonly written phonetically, occurs as a widely distributed name in stone inscriptions.

On K791 and Coe 1982: 60 *sak ox ok* is the *way* of a place called *ochnal*. The same glyph is found on one of a pair of jade plaques apparently found in the vicinity of Rio Azul (Berjormeau and Sonnery 1985: Plate 33, Fig. 2 1). On this plaque the context of the *ochnal* glyph is not well understood so that its identification as a toponyin is not beyond doubt.

On K3844 a different title or toponym is associated with *sak ox ok*. It consists of the title *k'inich* "sun faced," the sign *K'UL* "divine," and the *Ik'* sign with a *sa* super -fix. Usually, the *Ik'* sign shows up in an emblem glyph of a site that might be identical with Motul de San Jos6. Here, it has a *sa* superfix which distinguishes it from the canonical form of the emblem, unless the *sa* is simply a phonetic complement reinforcing the reading of the *Ik'* sign.

Jaguar Dog Occurences: Coe 1982 58 (K1211) (Fig. 22)



K1211 (Fig. 22)

This creature, called a "Jaguar Dog" by Coe (1982: 58) "...with canine head, long dog-ears with jaguar spots, jaguar paws, and jaguar tail ... Here,the creature reclines against some object, with its head thrown back. It wears a sacrificial scarf and paper wristlets and anklets ..." (Fig. 22). The glyphic name includes the color *CHAK*, a *na* superfix, and a portrait sign showing the head of this being. Next to it stands the *chatan* underworld toponym (MacLeod, Grube and Carlson n.d.) with which this creature is associated. There is no *way* glyph inserted between the name and the toponym.

k'ak'chitam "fire peccary" (Fig. 23) Occurences: Coe 1973: Grolier 38; Robicsek 1978: Fig. 150; MBD 48; MBD 49; MBD 173; Coe 1982: 60; K1743

Fig. 23 *(K1743).*

Only on MBD 48, MBD 49, MBD 173 and on K1743 can the peccary clearly be identified (Fig. 23). On these four vessels the peccary with hair and characteristic split nose, can either wear a sacrificial scarf, or a death eye collar. The most unusual feature are long volutes coming out of the nostrils.

The two hieroglyphs on MBD 48 identify the animal as a *Wakil chitam* "fire peccary." Thus, the scrolls indicate flames, an interpretation confirmed by the red colour of the volutes on Coe 1982: 60. *Chitam* is the word for the wild peccary Chol *chitam "cerdo,"* (Aulie and Aulie 1978: 49); Proto-Cholan **chitam "pig,"* original meaning is peccary, (Kaufman and Norman 1984: 118). The first glyph has the *KAK'* sign prefixed to an unknown sign we take to be a possible k'V sign acting as a phonetic complement. Together with the *li* suffix a reading *Wak'il*, "fire" is the first glyph. The creature on Coe 1982: 60 has a different mouth than the other peccaries. However, his hairy appearence and the red flames from his nostrils suggest that this is the same *way*. The glyphs also include the K'AK' "fire" logogram before a personified T128 k'V. The second glyph is the portrait variant of the glyph *chitam*.

tilal hix "tapir jaguar" (Fig. 24) Occurences: MBD 50, MBD 5 1, MBD 52, Coe 1982: 60, K1 743; K3812; K5070; K5367

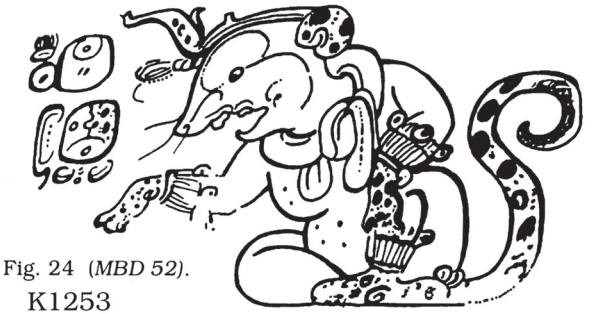


Fig. 24 *(MBD 52).*
K1253

Robicsek and Hales (1981: 48) identify this creature as an agouti. However, the occurences on K1743 and K5070 clearly show an animal with a cleft snout (Fig. 24). It therefore could be either a peccary or a tapir. In all occurences the animal has jaguar markings on the body; sometimes it has jaguar skin markings in the eyes and ajaguar tail. Also, it is al*way*s depicted with jaguar paws. The underworld association is underlined by the collar of death eves found on K1743 and Coe 1982: 60. The other examples of this *way* are dressed with a sacrificial cape. The hieroglyphic name of this *way* has first been interpreted by Nahm and Justeson in 1986. Later, Grube, Schele, and Fahsen (1992) in an analysis of the name of Quirigua's king "Two-legged Sky," found that it represents the same name as that of this *way*. The first part of the nominal phrase for this *way* reads til "tapir" and can be written either syllabically or with a logogram in form of an iconic depiction of a tapir head. The second element in the name is the glyph *hix* 'Jaguar." This element is completely missing on MBD 52, while on Coe 1982:60, it is infixed into the eye of the tapir logogram.

Tilal Hix is the *way* of a location spelled with the T713a "flat hand" sign over the syllable te (T87). This may be the same glyph as the "hand-*te*" title written very often after the Xultun emblem glyph on monuments from that site (see Houston 1986:Fig. 9). On MBD 50 this glyph occurs together with the title ahaw and a prefix, probably the syllable *yo*.

k'ak'ne tz'utz' "fire tail coati"

(Fig. 25) Occurences: Coe 1973: Grolier 37; MBD 44; MBD 45; MBD 47; MBD 48a; Coe 1982: 60; K1381; November 4; K3459;K3812;K4116;K5084?

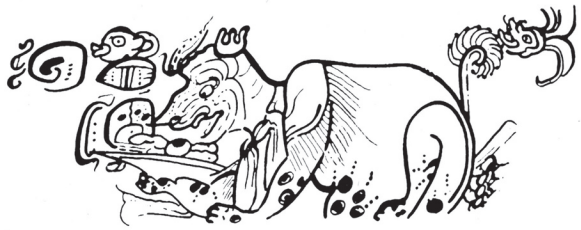


Fig. 25 *(K4116).*

Robicsek and Hales (1981), Coe (1982) and Spero and Kerr (1989) all identify this creature as a dog because of the notched ear (Mosca Chiclera ear) and the bushy tail. However, this animal also has distinctive jaguar markings (Fig. 25). It is al*way*s dressed with a sacrificial scarf, or a death-eye collar. Very often, it holds a plate with body parts. On Coe 1982: 60, the creature holds nothing but has an *ak'bal* jar hanging in front of the chest. In all examples, the tail is emitting smoke or flames like a torch.

The glyphic names seem especially to address the flaming tail, as they combine the *KAK'* "fire" sign with a scroll that could well be a coiled tail (*ne* in all Maya languages). The second glyph is Nahm's (n.d.) *tz'u* syllable over the sign *tz'i* (Stuart 1987: 1-11). This gives us a word like *tz'utz'*. In the Cholan languages and in some Eastern Maya languages, *tz'utz'* is the word for "Coati," (note Chol *ts'uts'ub "tejón"* Aulie and Aulie 1978: 124); *tz'u-tz'ub* "animal Wacuach)" (Attinasi 1973:350); Jacalteco *tz'utz'*"coatimundi" (Campbell 1988:223); Mam *tz'utz' "pizote"* (Maldonado Andr6s, Ordofiez Domingo and Ortiz Domingo 1986:410). The name of this *way* can thus be deciphered as *k'ak' ne tz'utz'* "fire tail coati." According to MBD 45, MBD 47 and Coe 1982: 60, he is the *way* of the Wul "divine" Tikal *ahaw*.

Wan bah ch'o "yellow gopher rat" (Fig. 26) Occurences: Schele 1985: Fig. 3; Sotheby's 1986:132; Hellmuth 1987: Abb. 52; K2023; K306 1; Tonina Stucco Panel

Fig. 26a *(K2023).*

This is a large gopher with its characteristic long front teeth. His body is decorated with *tzuk* "partition" markings often found in names and epithets of supernaturals (Fig. 26a). In this context, they could be a play on the Chol word *tsuc* "ratón" (Aulie and Aulie 1977:119). On the Sotheby's (1986: 132) vase the gopher wears a red scarf and carries an object in its hand. All other examples depict the gopher holding an *ak'bal* vase.

The *way* on Schele 1985: Fig. 3, is associated with the same name phrase, *k'an bah ch'o.* However, here the *way* is shown as a male, his head covered with a large scarf and adorned with a shell earflare. He has a knife in his left hand; in his other hand, the ak'bal vase (Fig. 26b). It would seem to be the ak'bal vase that makes him the human counterpart of the *k'an bah ch'o.*

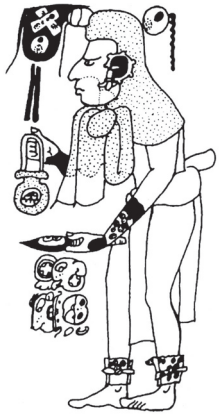


Fig. 26b *(after Schele 1985: fig.3).*

The nominals identify the creature in all its occurences as a *k'an bah ch'o* "yellow gopher rat." The second head that sometimes follows the T75 7 *BAH* gopher is the *CH'O* "rat" logogram. *Bah* is the word for the pocket gopher (Orthogeomys spp.) in almost all Maya languages (Rätsch and Probst 1985: 238). The combination of the words *bah* and *ch'o* in Yucatec describes large varieties of rats: *ah ba chho* "ratones grandes que andan como topos debaxo de la tierra" (Bolles n.d.).The *k'an bah ch'o* is the *way* of a place whose name starts with *OL* (T506). Sometimes, one or two hitherto unidentified signs in form of wavy lines are suffixed to this glyph.

Finally, we would like to turn special attention to the newly excavated stucco frieze from Toniná. One of the figures on this magnificient underworld scene is *k'an bah ch'o,* holding an object that according to David Freidel (pers. comm.June 1993) represents a ball for the ballgame with the name of Hunahpu inscribed on it. (Fig 26c). The three glyphs in front of him confirm this identification. Here, the *ba* part is written with the T501"imix" allograph. In this context, the *kan bah ch'o* is associated with *xaman* "north."

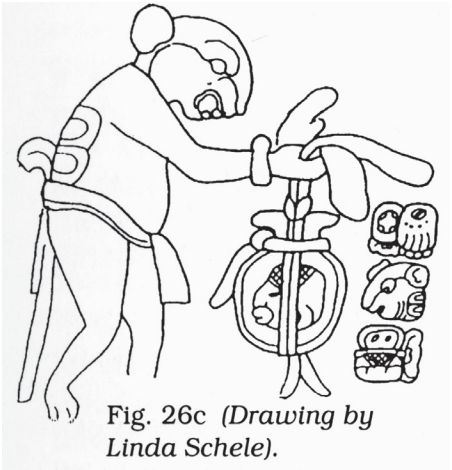


Fig. 26c *(Drawing by Linda Schele).*

yax tan wax "blue belly fox" and ***Wak' tan wax*** "fire belly fox" (Fig. 27) Occurences:Coe 1982: 60; Sotheby's 1986:132; K1379; K1901; K3312; K5084

Fig. 27 *(K1901).*

Coe (1982: 111) describes this creature painted on a vase in the Pearlman collection as "Another case of a creature combining features of different animals, this composite creature is a kind of canine with a rodent's mouth; it lacks the 'torn ear' of true canine deities" (fig.27). On the Sotheby's vase, this *yax tan wax* is shown with jaguar paw hands and a jaguar tail, probably to mark its underworld connections. This association is also stressed by the torn-out eyeball in its left hand. Both on the Pearlman vase and K1901, *yax tan wax* is dressed with a red scarf around its neck.

The glyphs for this *way* read *yax tan wax*. While *yax* is the colour green/blue," *tan* means "belly," and *wax* is the word for "fox" in Cholan and Tzeltal (e.g. Chol wax "zorra gris, Urocyon einereoargentus," Aulie and Aulie 1977: 214); Tzeltal *wax* "el gato de monte, zorra" (Slocum and Gerdel 1971: 199). The name of this *way* thus translates as "green/blue belly fox." It should be noted, however, that in no instance is the belly painted blue. On two vases, this *way* shows up with a variant of this name: *k'ak' tan wax* "fire belly fox" (K3312; K5084). The *k'ak'* part of the name could also refer to fever or some kind of disease.

Yax tan wax is the *way* of a *k'ul* "divine" place. The main sign of the toponym has some resemblance to a sign that occurs on a number of Ik'-Site ceramics and on Tayasal vessel T713/6-22 as part of a name or a title.

Fig. 28 *(K1901).*

k'ak'i sotz' "fire bat" (Fig. 28)Occurences: MBD 52; MBD 53; MBD 55; K1901;K2716;K5367

Scrolls of red blood or flames emerge from the opened mouth of this realistically painted bat (Fig. 28). The bat has its wings open so that one can see death markings, percentage signs, crossed bones and lower jaws with which the wings are marked. On MBD 53, *k'ak'i sotz'* holds the plate with the disembodied eye, hand and bone, and on K2716 it is shown with a trilobed knife often found in sacrificial scenes.

The name of the bat is spelled with the *K'AK'* "fire" sign, the T128 sign (with a possible phonetic value *k'*V, perhaps *k'i,* see discussion in Grube and MacLeod 1990), and the head of a bat, reading *SOTZ'*. *k'ak'i sotz'*translates as "fire bat." On K2716 it is stated that *k'ak'i sotz'* the *way* of the *chatan winik* underworld location (MacLeod, Grube and Carlson n.d.). On MBD 55 the *way* accompanies the *ox hab te* toponym associated with Rio Azul.

REPTILES

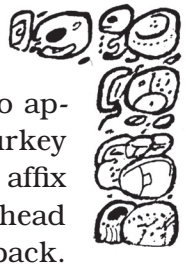
tzuk... amal "toad" (Fig. 29) Occurences: MBD 32; MBD 33; MBD 34; MBD 35; MBD 39; MBD 43; MBD 44; MBD 47; K2041; K4116

Fig. 29a *(K4116).*

This creature can easily be identified as a toad (Spero and Kerr 1989: 6) (Fig. 29a). The toad has an ear marked with three dots; the entire head resembles the head variant for the syllable *e* which is also based on the head of a toad. The headdress is formed by a fish nibbling a water lily, stressing the aquarian nature of the toad. Like other *way*, he carries a plate with a death's eye, a hand and a bone. A unique feature is a giant tzuk head on his back (Grube and Schele 199 1).

The name glyph of this *way* usually is composed of two glyphs. The first is the affix variant of the *TZUK* logogram 706

Fig. 29b.



in front of a head that also appears in the name of the turkey (see below). Perhaps the affix is a reference to the *tzuk* head marking on the toad's back. Although the head cannot yet be read with any certainty, there is a possibility that it reads *k'ach* or *ak'ach* in the name of the turkey. The second glyph in the toad nominal also is problematic, as it is written *a-ma-la,* suggesting a word *amal*. No such word can be found in any dictionaries to refer to toads; however, *am* translates as "spider" in almost all Maya languages. There is a name for a toad in Yucatec which includes the word *am*: *am po much* "escuerzo o sapo ponzofioso" (Barrera ViLsquez 1980: 532). (Fig. 29b)

The name of the toad who is attacked by the Morning Star God on Dresden p.49 also begins with the vowel *a-* (Fig. 29c). The second sign is the Penis-headed

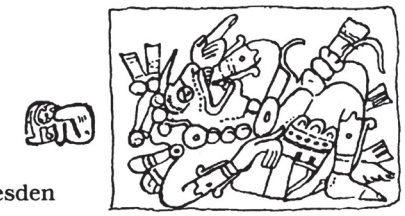


Fig. 29c (Dresden Codex p. 49).

manikin glyph (cf. Closs 1988). If the Dresden name is equivalent to the name of the *way*, then the Penis-headed manikin glyph should have a phonetic value *m*V. The similarity of this sign with Landa's *m*, and the association of it with a glyph read *emi* "he descended" (Grube and Nahm 1991) are a few arguments in favour of a reading *me*. The toad is a *way* of *?-te ahaw* on MBD 33 and K2041, and cf *bate* on MBD 47

sak bak nah chapat "white bone house centipede" (Fig. 30) Occurence: MBD 54 K1256

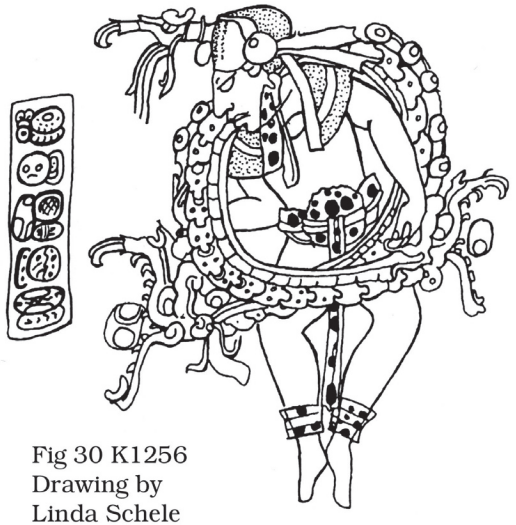


Fig 30 K1256
Drawing by
Linda Schele

This *way* only occurs once. It is the skeletal version of a bicephalic snake wrapped around the body of a human being (Fig. 30). The first two glyphs of the nominals read *sak bak nah.* This is the *sak bak nah* "white bone house" snake found in many other contexts on the monuments. It forms the corners of ancestor cartouches and the Skeletal Maw on the base of Pakal's sarcophagus in Palenque (Schele 1992: 158-159). The *chapat* part of the name of the *way* then should correspond to the *chan* element of the name in Palenque. Interestingly, *chapat* is a word for the centipede in Chorti and Yucatec: Chorti *chapaht* "animal said to resemble the centipede" (Wisdom 1949); Yucatec *(ah) chapat* "ciento pies, insecto; sabandija que entra en el oido y mata; nombre generico de las escolopendras." ((Barrera VJLsquez 1980: 84); Tzeltal *chapat* "ciempiés" (Slocum and Gerdel 1971: 132). It seems that on this vase the skeletal bicephalic snake is in fact the skeleton of a centipede. In Maya ethnozoology, centipedes and snakes are classified in the same taxonomic class (Hunn 1977: 144). That the centipede in Maya mythology acts as a snake is confirmed by the interpretation of the *name ah uuk chapat*. It occurs in colonial Yucatec texts as "serpiente fabulosa de siete cabezas" (Barrera Vdsquez 1980: 898). The *sak bak nah chapat* is the *way* of *bak-le* or *bakel* "bone" (place),perhaps Palenque.

buch te chan "swollen? snake?" Occurence: Altar Vase

Fig. 31 *Altar Vase (Drawing by Linda Schele).*

Another unique *way* figure (Fig. 31), shows a man wearing long pants with characteristic snake skin markings. He is swinging a live snake in an arc over his head. His eyes are closed as if he were in an altered state of mind. With one hand he embraces the tail of the snake and the other hand is raised. The snake has a huge swollen belly.

The glyphs accompanying the figure obviously focus on the snake, since the second glyph is *chan* "snake." The preceding glyph begins with the syllable *bu,* is followed by a sign whose reading, although much debated, has not yet been deciphered convincingly, and a *te* suffix. It is possible but far from being proven that the sign graphically originates in a depiction of a female breast, *chu* in the Cholan languages. In this case, the word referred to could be *buch te* and could be based on Chortí *p'uch* "any kind of flap, hanging or dangling object, hanging part of body, flag" (Wisdom 1949: 594), and *te* "wood." A similar human holding a snake also occurs on K793. (eds. note: The figure wears the ikon of an *ah K'hun)* In contrast to the *way*, this figure does not dance with the snake. The toponym associated with this *way* is the same toponyrn found with *tilal hix* "tapir Jaguar," a flat hand over the *te* sign.

BIRDS

Fig. 32 *(K2010).*

tz'utz'ak'ach "coati turkey hen" (Fig. 32) Occurences: MBD 49; MBD 173; K2010; K2041

This creature is easily identified as a turkey through its diagnostic head and the nose appendage over its beak (Fig. 32). The turkey is realistically depicted with a crest of feathers. The two glyphs of the nominal phrase begin with the glyph *tz'utz'* "coati," while the second glyph has an initial a sign in front of the same head mentioned in the name of the toad (see above). Since the second glyph should name the animal itself, we have to check the dictionaries for a word for "turkey" beginning with the vowel a-. Only Cholan *ak'ach* "turkey hen" fits this pattern (cf. Proto-Cholan **ak'ach* "turkey hen" Kaufman and Norman 1984: 115). This would result in an *ak'ach* or *k'ach* reading for the main sign. However, such a reading cannot be successfully applied in the toad nominal yet. Spero and Kerr (1989: 3) suggest a *kutz* reading for the first glyph of the nominals. This reading was proposed by them before the *tz'u* syllabic value for the superfix was established by Nahm. Furthermore, a *kutz* "turkey" reading cannot be reconciled with the fact that the second sign is a glottalized *tz'i*.

In sum, the turkey is called "coati turkey hen." This seems to be a name based on creative phantasy, as no coati features are discernible in the pictures. In none of the examples is the *way* glyph associated with a title or a toponym.

Oscellated Turkey (Fig. 33) Occurences: Coe 1982: 60

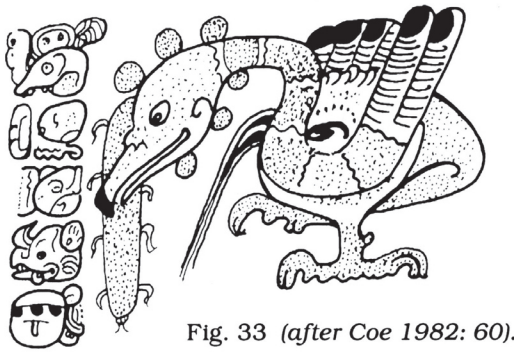


Fig. 33 *(after Coe 1982: 60).*

This *way* is called a "*Muan*-cormorant" by Coe (1982: 60). He describes the creature as follows, "What otherwise would be a cormorant has been fitted with the black tipped feathers of the *Muan*-bird. It has a long beak, red dots attached to the head, and a red pendant behind it" (Fig. 33). We believe, however, that this red pendant is the wattle of the oscellated turkey. This turkey has no counterpart on any other ceramic. He is associated with a toponym of three glyphs. Only the second, a bat head and the third, the "Ik'" sign with an a suffix) can be identified, but not matched to any known site.

kuy "owl" (Fig. 34)

Occurences: Popol Vuh Bowl; K3395 Coe 1982: 58; Quirarte 1979: 8-9

Fig. 34a *(Popol Vuh bowl).* K3395

Fig. 34b *(Coe 1982: 58).* K1211

Again we cannot be absolutely sure whether the three examples found represent the same *way*. While the Popol Vuh Bowl bird is resting on a bone throne and carries a human face in its beak (Fig. 34a), the bird on Coe (1982: 58) is flying and has a snake looped around the neck (Fig. 34b). Coe identifies this bird as a horned owl because of the "horns" on its head. In both cases the *way* are identified through hieroglyphic captions. The hieroglyphic captions on the Popol Vuh bowl are difficult to read. It seems that the first glyph is an iconic representation of the owl's head with an unidentified suffix (perhaps a feather). No nominals are written on Quirarte 1979: 8-9. The bird on this vase is described by Quirarte as a "composite avian creature with serpent scarf' (Quirarte 1979: 116).

On Coe 1982: 58 the name is written with a single glyph combining the syllables *ku* and *yu* to the word *kuy* "owl" in Yucatec (cf. Yucatec *ah kuy* "especie de lechuza, ave de rapifia nocturna no identificada del orden de los Strigiformes" Barrera VAsquez 1980: 342). The same name occurs together with the *ox1ahun kan* title as the name of the Muan bird in the Dresden Codex, (pp. 7c, 10a). In the same phrase it is written that the *kuy* owl is the *way* of a toponym called *chan yo'... ha*. This toponym has not yet been identified as that of a known place.

koko ... (Fig. 35) Occurences: Coe 1982: 58; K1211; MBD 50; MBD 53?; K2716

Fig. 35 *(MBD 50).*

On the same cylindrical vase that shows the *kuy* owl, another fantastic avian *way* shows up that combines features of an owl with a skull of some sort (fig.35). Coe (1982: 58) stresses that its belly is open and emits a smoke-scroll with attached death eyes. The bird has a snake looped around the neck. The bird on MBD 50 with its extremely long beak looks different, but shares the same name glyph with the skulled owl. On MBD 53 the owl seems to have flint signs under the wings. His name is spelled with the syllable *ko* prefixed to a bat head, which tentatively has been deciphered as *xu*. On MBD 50 the *ko* sign is doubled, suggesting that the name of the bird is *koko*.... In Yucatec, *koko* is the word for the trogon bird (Barrera Vdsquez 1980: 330). What is the meaning of the bat head in this context? If the bat head is used as the syllable *xu,* we should find a bird *kokox* in the dictionaries. We have not been successfull in this attempt and have to wait for better evidence for the decipherment of the bat head. This *way* is associated with a "Split Sky" toponym with an unidentified prefix.

tan bihil kimi "death on the path" (Fig. 36) Occurences: K791

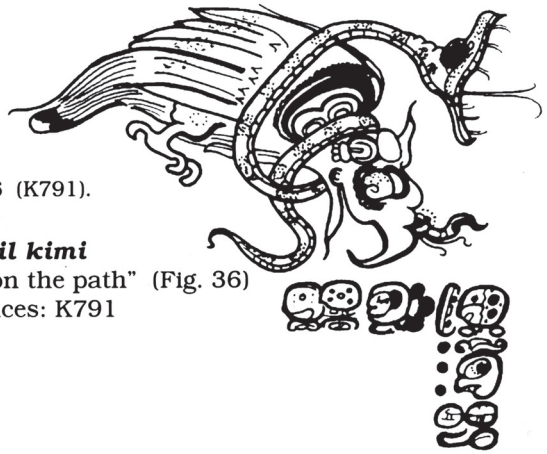


Fig. 36 (K791).

tan bihil kimi
"death on the path" (Fig. 36)
Occurences: K791

This avian *way* occurs only once, on K791. It shows a bird of prey with a snake round his neck (Fig. 36). The large eyes of the bird are looking down to the seated *mab*. The name of the *way* is *tan bihil kimi* "death on the road/ path." He, like the deer -monkey, is a *way* of *ox witz ahaw*, the *ahaw* of the three hills, or Caracol. Here, the word *witz* "hill" is written with a *wi* sign over a variant of the worm bird. This bird head is another allograph for the *tzi* syllable.

INSECTS

ah chak xu "red leafcutter ant" (Fig. 37) Occurences: Coe 1982: 58

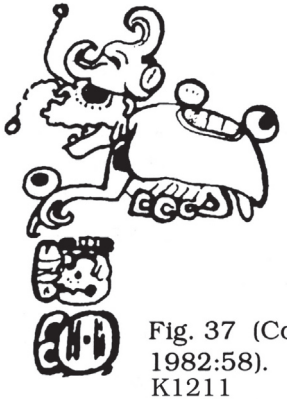


Fig. 37 (Coe 1982:58). K1211

This is another unique and extraordinary *way*. Coe calls it "a creature of the air" and describes the details of it (Fig. 37) "...it is not so much avian as insect-like, with a skull-like head that has both human and non-human characteristics; there may be antennae or beetle horns in front; death eyes are attached to the body" (Coe 1982: 58). Only the reading of the glyphic name helps to identify this being as a leafcutter ant. The first glyph reads *chak ah xu* or *ah chak xu* "he, the red leafcutter ant." *Xu*' is the word for leafcutter ant in Chol; Chol *xu*' "arriera" (Aulie and Aulie 1978: 140); *xu*'"leaf-cutter ant" (Josserand and Hopkins 1988). The two antennae described by Coe could well be the prominent pincers of the leafcutter ant used to cut leaves and carry them.

Though there is no *way* glyph in between, it seems clear that the next glyph is the toponymic part of the caption. It is the colour *EK'* "black" prefixed to a sign with two double lines on both sides of a central dot. The same main sign shows up on a God N effigy vessel (Coe 1982: 33) in a context with an *ahaw* sign, so that it might be the same toponymic title.

DEATH GODS

u ku chi kimi "deer death" Fig. 38) Occurences: MBD 138; Harmer Rooke 1985: 199;K771;K791;KI901;K2023; K3061; K3924; K4922; Copan peccary skull

This is one of the most prominent skeletal *way* figures. It is possible that the figures listed here are in fact two different characters that are sometimes impossible to distinguish. One character is walking with a large stick and carrying a mecapal with a huge bundle. Sometimes he wears a hat and a kind of skirt. The most important attribute certainly is a

Fig. 38a *(K791).*

large conch shell (Fig. 38a). In addition, he sometimes (see MBD 138) carries the head of a deer on his merchant bundle, (fig.38b) or deer antlers grow from his forehead (see K2023). The other character on K791, K1901 and K4922 is seated, blowing his conch shell. Both characters occur at the same time on K4922, suggesting that they should be kept separate. However, the similarity, both of their iconography as well as their names, makes a clear distinction almost impossible.

The nominals vary greatly. They can roughly be divided into three parts. The first is a glyph with an *u* sign before a *ku* sign (with varying suffixes). Often the *u* sign is substituted by a sign that looks

Fig. 38b (K771)

like a death eye. The second glyph is not al*way*s present and spells the word chi "deer," either with a syllabic sign or a deer head logogram (K2023). The third part is the word *kimi* "death." Thus, somehow this *way* is a "deer death."

There seems to be some confusion about the association of this *way* with a certain toponym. On K791 the *way* is connected with a k'ul ahaw of a place that has Thompson's T709 as its main sign. On K2023 the deer death is associated with a Uaxactun ahaw. On MBD 138 he is the *way* of the divine "dance place."

k'ak' ol kimi "fire center death" (Fig. 39) Occurences: Clarkson 1978: Fig. 11; Coe 1982 58; MBD 29; MBD 3 1?; MBD 35; MBD 39; MBD 41; MBD 54; MBD 55; K718; K2595; K3831; K3924; K4946; K5017

Fig. 39a *(K3924).*

This character is a black-faced skeletal *way* with long hair and death eyes attached to his head (Fig. 39a). His most important feature are red scrolls representing fire or flames emerging from his belly. He is usually shown with an axe in his hand, and sometimes with the head of a victim that he has decapitated.

The hieroglyphic name reads *k'ak'ol kimi* "fire center death." The word *ol* "center" is spelled with the T506 sign that was

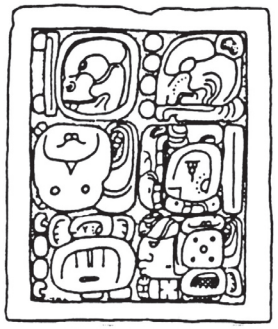


Fig. 39b *(Drawing by Linda Schele).*

recently deciphered by us as a logogram *OL* "center, heart, entrance" (Grube and Nahm n.d.). Support for the *OL* reading of T506 comes from the *o* phonetic complement on MBD 54 (K1256) and the *la* phonetic complement on MBD 35. (K1646) The death head is substituted on MBD 54 by a T528 *ku* sign. Both the death head and the *ku* sign al*way*s occur with a deer hoof prefix.which is not yet deciphered. The fact that it is found in combination with *ku* signs could indicate that its vowel is *u.* Interestingly, the name of the *way* is used as a house name on Palenque Bodega 1075 (Fig. 39b).

"Fire center death" is a *way* of *ox hab te,* the Rio Azul toponym (MBD 35, MBD 41). On MBD 35 an unknown glyph *ba-*? is inserted between *ox hab te* and the *way* glyph.

hun ... kimi "one death"" (Fig. 40)

Occurences: Schele 1985: Fig. 2; MBD 30 (K1197)(eds note: most of the rest of this vase is fake)

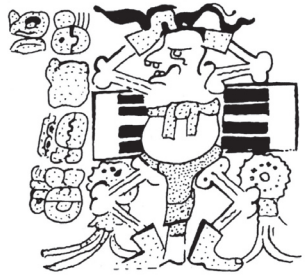
K1197Fig. 40 *(MBD 30).*

The few examples of this skeleton *way* are quite different from each other, so it is not absolutely safe to group them together. MBD 30 and Schele 1985: Fig. 2, share the same nominals; the number "one" in front of a death head, and only on MBD 30 (not clear), a deer hoof preceeds another skull sign (Fig. 40). In both cases we see a dancing (Schele 1985: Fig. 2) or walking (MBD 30)(K1197) skeleton, with a bundle of hair on his skull, carrying an eccentric staff and trilobed object used to decapitate humans. Possibly the name of this *way* is identical to the name of the second decapitated individual mentioned on Yaxchilán Hieroglyphic Stair*way* 2, Step VII, D2.

On MBD 30 *hun ... kimi* is the *way* of *ah chal. Ah chal* is also mentioned as a title of a sublord of Knot-Jaguar of Bonampak on YaxchilAn Lintel 35 and is paired with an ahaw superfix on Grolier 52. (K5515)

chan ut? "snake face??" (Fig. 41)

Occurcnce: Popol Vuh bowl (K3395)



K3395
Fig. 41 *(Popol Vuh bowl).*

This is a skeletal *way* with a black-white -black bar on his back and red-spotted round cloths at each knee. The glyphic name *chan ut?* "Snake face" (and a third glyph that cannot be recognized) remains mysterious (Fig. 41).

chak ch'ah kimi "red bile death"

Occurences: MBD 138; Schele 1985: Fig. 2; Quirarte 1979: Figs. 8-1, 8-7; K5084

Fig. 42 *(after Schele 1985: fig.2).*

This figure is a skeleton in an animated pose. It is always shown with one hand lifted up (Fig. 42). In three cases, an *ak'bal* jar is hanging from the elbow of the raised arm. The most characteristic feature of this *way*, however, is its swollen belly with the sign *hu* infixed. The reason for this infix could be the meaning of the word *hu* "massage" in Tzotzil; Tzotzil *ju'llan* "massage persons painful belly" (Laughlin 1988: 215). In fact, on two of the vases, the skeleton rubs his swollen belly with his left hand. The reason for his swollen belly is revealed in the name *chak ch'ah kimi* "red bile death." In all Cholan languages *ch'ah* is the word for "bitter," and by extension, also refers to "bile, gall," Chontal: *ch'ah* "bile, gall" (Knowles 1984: 413). *Chak ch'ah kimi* is the *way* of a place addressed with a toponym that combines the sky sign *chaan* with a head followed by the syllable *ta* on MBD 138. Two other examples show the same head but not the *ta* suffix, indicating that the *ta* suffix is a phonetic complement. On Quirarte 1979: Fig. 8-1, red *ch'ah* death is the *way* of *hix witz* "Jaguar mountain," a location often mentioned in texts from the Usumacinta region.

?-ki xinil kimi "stinking death" (Fig. 43)

Occurences: Coe 1982: 58 and 60

This seated skeleton wears a death collar, and death eyes are attached to his head and back. On Coe 1982: 58, he wears a strange hat that is missing on Coe 1982: 60 (fig.43). In both cases he wears a loincloth, yet only on Coe 1982: 60 (K927), is the perforated penis clearly visible. On Coe 1982: 58, there is ajar or spiked censer in front of him in which a severed head or crossed bones are placed. Curls of red flames indicate that the contents of these jars are burning. The glyphs on Coe 1982:58 are very eroded. On Coe 1982: 60, one can read the name as *?-ki xi?-ni-li? KIMI* The glyph *xinil* probably spells a

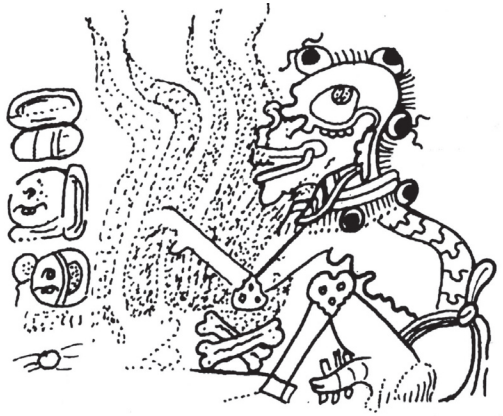


Fig. 43 *(after Coe 1982: 60).* K927

derivation from Tzotzil *xiin* "stinking as some meats or human sweat" (Laughlin 1988: 302). No toponym is found in association with this *way*.

GOD A' VARIANTS

mok chih "knot mouth" (Fig. 44)

Occurences: K2284; K2286; K2942; K3924

Fig. 44 *(K2286)*

Mok chih, (Fig. 44) first identified by Grube and Stuart (1987) on K2284 and K2286 is a death god who can easily be recognized through one or more of the following features: a large hat or a huge bone as a headdress, black markings around the eyes, three knots attached to the nose, insect wings, *ak'bal* markings, black handprints or percentage signs on the body, a protruding navel, and a large *ak'bal* jar in his hands which seems to contain insects (bees?). His name glyph has been deciphered by Grube and Stuart as *mok chi* "knot mouth," referring to the string of knots dangling from his nose. On K2284 and K3924 another glyph that was already discussed in connection with the *to-?-ek'hix* is prefixed.

Interestingly, under the entry *moko*, Barrera Vasquez (1980: 527) translates "idolo de los de Campeche." Could this be the same supernatural? No toponym is found in association with this *way*.

ch'akba... "se!f-decapitating God A" (Fig. 45)

Occurences: MBD 40; Altar Vase; K792; K2942; K3059?; K5112; Popol Vuh Bowl

This is God A' from the Codices who beheads himself with a flint knife (Fig. 45). He is identified as a God A' by the dark markings around his eyes and percentage signs on his skin. He is the classic precursor to the God A' found in most of the postclassic codices (Taube 1992:Fig. 2). The glyphic captions usually contain two elements: the first is the glyph *ch'akba* "self-decapitation," the second glyph is the head of God A', sometimes with a *na* phonetic complement. In two instances the two elements are merged into one single glyph (Altar Vase and K792).

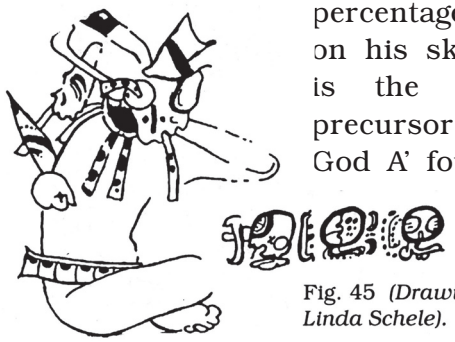


Fig. 45 *(Drawing by Linda Schele).*

The self-decapitating God A'is al*way*s associated with underworld toponyms, like *matawil*, the entrance to the underworld on the Altar Vase and on K792 (note that on the Altar Vase the *ma* and *ta* are merged into one sign). On MBD 40 he is the *way* of the *chatan winik* location. Only on K5112 the toponym cannot be read.

Enema God A' (Fig. 46) Occurences: Coe 1982: 60; K1379; K1381; K1900?;

Most examples for this *way* seem to show up on rather eroded vessels (Fig. 46). These God A' figures also have dark markings), around the eyes and percentage signs on the body, holding either enema syringes or large containers for intoxicating liquids in their hands. The best

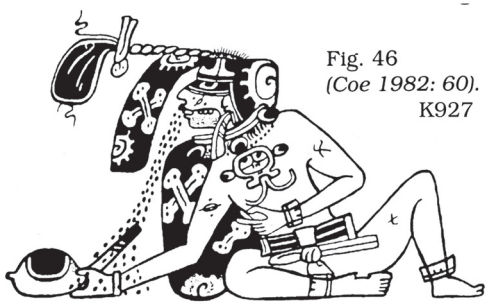


Fig. 46
(Coe 1982: 60).
K927

preserved example (Coe 1982:60), shows God A' vomiting blood over an enema syringe; his head cloth and cloak bear the crossed long-bones of death. Unfortunately, the accompanying hieroglyphic names cannot be identified on any but the Coe 1982: 60 (K927) vase. Here the first glyph shows the head of God A' with missing lower jaw, another portrait sign in the next glyph and added to it an unidentified affix, and finally the chatan glyph naming the associated place. The last glyph (*?-bi*) may be a substitution for the missing winik part of the locative.

God A' with stone in the hand (Fig. 47)

Occurences: Altar Vase; Popol Vuh Bowl; K791;K2942;K5070;

Here we see a God A' with a large *kawak*-stone in his hand (Fig. 47). His body is marked black. On K5070 he holds an *ak'bal* jar instead of the stone and he wears a head cloth with crossed bones painted on it. On K791 and the Altar Vase his hair is tied with a knotted headband. The hieroglyphic name again is composed of two parts. The first is the "stone-in-hand" glyph discussed before. This glyph, with an *n*V-phonetic complement, certainly refers to the stone in God A:s hand, The next glyph is the name of God A' himself. It is the same glyph that shows up as his name in the Codices. On K791 the name has an *ah* prefix and a *na* suffix. Both signs seem to be phonetic complements, suggesting that the name of God A' was something like *a ... n*. In this context we would like to mention that God A' is also associated with enema rituals (see above), In Yucatec dictionaries we find *akan* as the name of a god of alcoholic beverages (Martinez Hernandez 1929: 66: *acan* "el dios del vino que es baco"). On K791 and K5070 this God A' the *way*

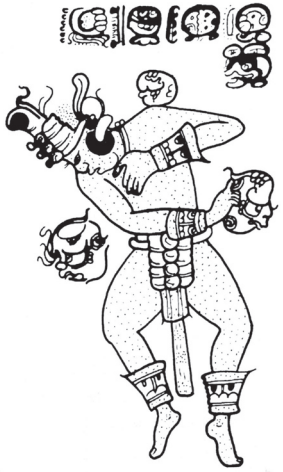


Fig. 47 *(K791).*

of *k'ul kan ahaw,* the lord of "Site Q." On the Altar Vase, the *way* is associated with a still unknown toponymic title.

FEMALES

na k'ul ... ya "Lady..." (Fig. 481 Occurences: K2286

Fig. 48 *(K2286)*

Almost all of the *way* are male. This *way* is one of the two exceptions that are female. The picture shows a kneeling female with a snake skull headdress, black eye markings, a hand substituting for the lower jaw, adorned with a death collar and dressed in a huipil (Fig. 48). The arms are decorated with percentage signs. The glyphic nominals are composed of two glyphs: the first is a female

head prefixed to the signs k'u-1a, the second glyph repeats the head with the missing lower jaw with a *ya* suffix added. Except for the female prefix reading *NA* "Lady," no part of the name has yet been deciphered. No toponym is found in the glyphic caption.

OTHER CHARACTERS

sitz' winik "gluttony man" (Fig. 49) Occurences: Coe 1982:60; Schele 1985: Fig. 3; K2286; K2716?;

Fig. 49 *(K2286).*

K2716 places this *way* in a scene with a bird of prey. It is not clear whether the entire scene represents a different *way*, or whether the bird is separate from the reclining individual with the swollen belly. There is only one hieroglyphic caption for both of them which differs from the other captions for this *way*.

The first glyph in the name of this *way*, except on K2716, is al*way*s composed of the syllables *si* and *tz'i.* The second glyph is *winik* "man" or *kimi* "death." The word *sitz'*in Chol can refer to the swollen belly of this *way*: *sifflel* "glotoneria" (Aulic and Aulie 1978: 105). In Tzotzil, *sitz'il* means "gnawing hunger" (Laughlin 1988: 197). In Yucatec, *sitz'* means "to desire something vehemently"; *sitz'* "deseo, antojo vehemente de haber algo, asi de comida como de riquezas, codicia, avaricia" (Barrera Vdsquez 1980: 734). Thus, the *way* perhaps shows an individual suffering from gluttony (Grube 1986: 226).

The toponyms associated with this *way* are the same on Coe 1982: 60 and K2716: a color, perhaps *yax,* before a sky sign with characteristic infix in the upper half. The toponyrn on Schele 1985: Fig. 3 is *TI a-sayu, "at asay."* Probably, this toponym is identical with the *ah sa-yu* toponym found with the *ch'aktel hix,* the cage jaguar."

hal winik "water man" (Fig. 50).

Occurences: MBD 54

K1256
Fig. 50 *(MBD 54).*

This is a figure reclining amid floating fish and holding a human head dripping blood (Fig. 50). The figure is placed into a large oval that seems to represent a body of water, a suspicion confirmed by the fish in front of him. The glyphic caption reads *hal* or *naabal winik* "water" or "lake man." He is the *way* of a divine ahaw of a locale marked by a "water scroll." This water scroll also is the main sign of the Altun Ha emblem glyph.

Young man in flames (Fig. 51).

Occurences: MBD 54, K3831: K3924;K5112

Fig. 51 *(K3831).*

Even though the man within the flames is falling on MBD 54 and standing upright in the two other examples, they seem to depict the same *way* (Fig. 51). On MBD 54 (K1256) we see a young man with an ahaw headband falling down on his back. He holds a stick in his right hand. On K3831 and K5112 the man is inside a red flamed cartouche. The most complete nominal phrase occurs with his name on K5112. The name begins with the *TZUK* sign before *pa* or *paya*. The next glyph is *butz*'"smoke" or *K'ak*'"fire." The same *butz'*/*k'ak*' glyph also occurs on K383 1. Here, however, it is the first of two glyphs accompanying the representation of the *way*. The second glyph, a portrait, is not executed with enough care to permit a secure identification. Only on MBD 54 and on K5112 the *way* are associated with toponyms. The toponyms differ from each other and do not match any known examples.

k'ak' "fire" (Fig. 52)

Occurence: K791

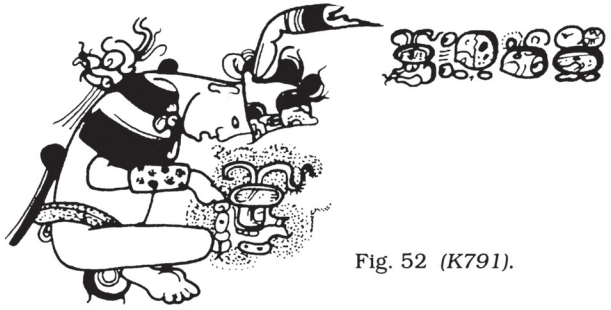


Fig. 52 *(K791).*

Above the *ch'aktel hix* of K791 we see a seated individual with a black-whiteblack colored cape and a headdress marked with the *tzuk* "partition" head (Fig. 52). He is looking down onto a censer (?) marked with the personified glyph T122: 563a surrounded by stylized red flames. The same glyph is repeated as the name glyph of this *way* and reads either *butz'* "smoke" or *k'ak*' "fire" (Stuart 1987: 10). He is the *way* of the *cha-tan ahaw,* the lord of the *chatan* underworld place (MacLeod, Grube and Carlson n.d.).

balan winik "man in the bundle" (Fig. 53) Occurences: MBD 54; K3924; Popol Vuh bowl (K3395) (Bruder 1981: 64)

This *way* figure is difficult to interpret. On the Popol Vuh bowl the *way* is shown as a human head (the ahaw head) inside a black day sign cartouche. On MBD 54 we have a seated male figure inside a dark oval shaped cartouche (Fig. 53a). On K3924 only the head and the legs of a male figure are seen coming out of a black circle that seems to represent a bundle or ball, since four knots are attached to its outside. The accompanying glyphs confirm that this is al*way*s the same *way* figure. The first glyph is a counterclockwise scroll, while the second glyph is *winik* (with wl- and *-ki* phonetic complementation). The first glyph on K3924 clearly has a *na* suffix,

while the suffix on MBD 54 seems to be a *ki.* Obviously this glyph refers to the black bundle into which the human figure is placed.

Fig. 53a *(K3924).*

The scroll sign with a *ni* suffix also shows up as the main sign of an unidentified emblem glyph on Altun Ha' Jade Plaque 256/3 and Nim Li Punit Stela 2 (see Grube, MacLeod, and Wanyerka 1992: Fig. 5) suggesting that the sign indeed had a final consonantic value *-n* . Very revealing is an occurence of this sign in a ballgame phrase on La Amelia Stela 2 (Fig. 53b). The text on this monument begins with the verb "to hurl" and then mentions the nominals of a royal captive as the name of *bolon naab*, an expression referring to the goals or scores of the ballgame, and somehow to the ball itself. However, after this phrase we find the glyph *u*-scroll-*nu* and then the name of the La Amelia king as the subject of the sentence. Obviously, the *u*-scroll-*nu* glyph restates that the captive-*bolon naab* is "the ball of' the La Amelia king. If this interpretation is correct, the scroll glyph would be another expression for the rubber ball

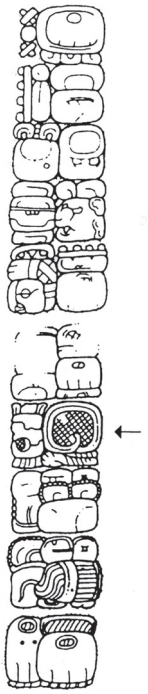


Fig. 53b
La Amelia Stela 2. Drawing by Steve Houston)

We tentatively suggest reading this glyph *balan*; note Yucatec *balan* "escondido, encubierto" (Barrera ViLsquez 1980:33); Chol *bal* "enrollar; contenido" (Aulie and Aulie 1978: 35); Tzotzil *balan ba* "roll around like children who throw themselves to the ground in a temper" (Laughlin 1988: 164); Tzeltal *balch'ujel* "rodar, volcar" (Slocum and Gerdel 1971: 119); *balalan* "revolcarse muchas veces" (Ara 1986).

Apparently, the *balan winik* is a *way* in form of a human ball. *Balan winik* is the *way* of a certain witz "mountain," according to MBD 54. On K3924 the toponymic phrase is unusually long and not yet well understood.

ADDITIONS

After finishing the main body of the text, we found another jaguar *way* whose characteristic features are a long tail, an infix in the eyes, and a long, deer-like snout. This *way* occurs on K3459, Quirarte 1979: 8-5, Robicsek 1978: Fig. 143, and Naj Tunich drawing 70, Glyph A4.Another new *way* in the guise of a bird is painted on K5632. Except for a sak prefix, the name of this *way* is not deciphered. The bird is one more *way* associated with Site 9.

After having the opportunity to study the Museo Popol Vuh bowl we realize that there is another jaguar *way* that was not included in the above descriptions. The picture shows a jaguar mounted on a wooden staff in the hand of a human being with long black hair. The glyphic name refers directly to this figure. The first part of the caption reads *k'o(h)-ba*

te "wooden figure" or "figure-stick" (for the reading of the first sign as *k'o* see Schele 1992). The second glyph spells *hi-xi* for *hix* "jaguar." It is possible that this *way* is identical to the jaguar walking with a stick shown on Robicsek 1978: Fig. 148.

Note: all drawings are by N. Grube, unless otherwise stated.

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